

MISCHIEF  
THEATRE

methuen | drama

# THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG

SECOND EDITION



BY HENRY LEWIS, JONATHAN SAYER AND HENRY SHIELDS

B L O O M S B U R Y

**Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer and Henry Shields**

From an original concept by Henry Lewis

**The Play That Goes Wrong**

Version in two acts

2nd Edition

B L O O M S B U R Y

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This version of the text went to print before the end of rehearsals and may differ slightly from the version performed.

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## Note on the text

This version of the text includes references to ‘Winston’ – Haversham Manor’s guard dog. These are an insert designed for some performances where there is an additional joke in the show where Trevor’s dog (Simon Le Bon) who is supposed to be playing Winston is missing and only finally appears at the curtain call. These references are designed to be kept in or lifted out as needed. In the version without the dog, Arthur simply finds the handkerchief himself.

## First Performance – One Act

*The Play that Goes Wrong* was first presented under the title *The Murder Before Christmas* on 4th December 2012 at The Old Red Lion Theatre in Angel Islington with the following cast:

Chris	Henry Shields
Jonathan	Steve Leask
Robert	Henry Lewis
Dennis	Jonathan Sayer
Sandra	Charlie Russell
Max	Dave Hearn
Annie	Nancy Wallinger
Trevor	Rob Falconer

## First Performance – Two Act

The extended two-act version of *The Play that Goes Wrong* was first presented as a Mischief Theatre production produced by Kenny Wax Ltd and Stage Presence Ltd at the Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury on Tuesday 21st January 2014 with the following cast:

Chris	Henry Shields
Jonathan	Greg Tannahill
Robert	Henry Lewis
Dennis	Jonathan Sayer
Sandra	Charlie Russell
Max	Dave Hearn
Annie	Lotti Maddox/Nancy Wallinger
Trevor	Rob Falconer
Understudies	Chris Currie & Alys Metcalf

Writers	Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer & Henry Shields
Director	Mark Bell
Designer	Nigel Hook
Lighting Designer	Ric Mountjoy
Costume Supervisor	Becky Evans
Production Manager	Digby Robinson
Stage/Company Manager	Nick Earle
Deputy Stage Manager	Beth Rennie
Technical Assistant Stage Manager	Craig Mccurdy
Understudy/Assistant Stage Managers	Chris Currie & Alys Metcalf
Rehearsal Stage Manager	Thomas Platt
Props Maker	Martin Thomas
Runner	Katie Francis

Produced by Kenny Wax & Mark Bentley

### **For Kenny Wax Ltd**

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### **For Mischief Theatre**

Artistic Director	Henry Lewis
Company Director	Jonathan Sayer
Production Manager	Tom Platt
Musical Director	Rob Falconer

## **Henry Shields** (Writer/Chris)

Henry trained at LAMDA and has been a member of Mischief Theatre since 2009. Credits include: *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* – actor/writer (Pleasance); *The Play That Goes Wrong* – actor/writer (Trafalgar Studios); *The Nativity Goes Wrong* – writer (Reading Rep); *The Busy Body* (Southwark Playhouse); *Lights! Camera! Improvise!*, *Mogic*, *One Turbulent Ambassador*, *Terra Nova*, *Holby City* (BBC) and *Halo* (Archer's Mark).

## **Henry Lewis** (Writer/Robert)

Henry trained at LAMDA and is the artistic director of Mischief Theatre. Henry writes, produces and performs for the company. Recent acting credits include: *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* (Pleasance); *The Play That Goes Wrong* (Trafalgar Studios); *Lights! Camera! Improvise!* (Soho Theatre/Arcola/Underbelly); *Mercury Fur* (Trafalgar Studios); *Improv Ad Break Live* (Comedy Central); *The Boy With the Cuckoo-Clock Heart* (Pleasance) and *Beasts and Beauties* (Hampstead Theatre). Recent writing credits include: *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* and *The Nativity Goes Wrong*.

## **Greg Tannahill** (Jonathan)

Trained at LAMDA.

Theatre includes: *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* and *The Play That Goes Wrong* (Mischief Theatre); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Lamb Players); *Beyond Beauty* (Rebel Theatre); *Events While Guarding the Bofors Gun* (Pennard Road Productions); *Irons* (Local Girl Productions); *Cabaret*, *Arcadia*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Our Country's Good*, *As You Like It* and *Some Voices* (LAMDA) and *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (Sam Wanamaker Festival Shakespeare's Globe).

## **Jonathan Sayer** (Writer/Dennis)

Jonathan trained at LAMDA and is the company director of Mischief Theatre, working for the company as a writer, producer and an actor.

Theatre: *The Play That Goes Wrong* (Mischief Theatre); *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* (Mischief Theatre); *Happy Birthday Simon* (Orange Tree Theatre) and *Across the River* (Soho Theatre).

Radio: *Not a Love Story* (BBC Radio 4).

Television: *Holby City* (BBC).

Improvisation: *Lights! Camera! Improvise!* (various); *Late Night Impro Fight* (Edinburgh Fringe) and *The Bristol 30 Hour Improvathon* (Bristol Old Vic).

Writing: *The Nativity Goes Wrong*, *The Play That Goes Wrong* and *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* (Mischief Theatre) and *The Butterfly Defect* and *Mogic* (Hiatus Theatre).

## **Charlie Russell** (Sandra)

Charlie trained at LAMDA.

Theatre includes: *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* (Pleasance); *The Play That Goes Wrong* (Mischief Theatre – Old Red Lion, Trafalgar Studios and Pleasance, Edinburgh); *The Miser* (Watermill Theatre, Newbury) and *Lights! Camera! Improvise!* (Mischief Theatre).

Television includes: *Doctors* (BBC).

Radio includes: *A Little Twist of Dahl* (BBC Radio 4).

## **Lotti Maddox** (Annie)

Lotti has been working with Mischief Theatre for the past twelve months, playing Sandra in *The Play That Goes Wrong* at Trafalgar Studios and also at the Old Red Lion Theatre. She has worked with Kneehigh Theatre, playing Miriam in *Fastburn*, and at the Orange Tree Theatre as Rosemary in *Love and Marriage*. Lotti graduated from LAMDA in 2012, and during her time training she also played Fiona in *One Turbulent Ambassador* at the Lyric Hammersmith and Katia in *Europe* at the Moscow Arts Theatre.



## **Dave Hearn** (Max)

Dave trained at Rose Bruford and on the foundation course at LAMDA.

Theatre includes: *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Peter Pan Goes Wrong*, *Lights! Camera! Improvise!* and Second Assistant in *Magic* (Mischief Theatre) and Dr Peter Hans in *Prometheus* (Secret Cinema).

TV includes: *Improv Ad Break Live*.

## **Rob Falconer** (Trevor)

Rob trained as an actor-musician at Rose Bruford. He is the musical director for Mischief Theatre.

Theatre includes: *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* and *Lights! Camera! Improvise!* (Mischief Theatre) and Bull Bill in *Cool Hand Luke* (Novel Theatre).

## **Mark Bell** (Director)

Trained at Ecole Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq and was co-artistic director of Liquid Theatre. Liquid shows as actor and co-director include: *If You Were Mine* (ACW); *Feeding Time* (BAC) and *Crave* (BAC and touring). Other credits include: *Endgame* (BAC); *The Secret Garden* (MLT); *On the Road to Baghdad* (Sadler's Wells); *Amok*, *The Breeze* and *Backwash* (Hoipolloi) and *Get Out of Here* (Commotion). Directing includes: *The Master* and *Margarita*. Mark has taught and directed at LAMDA, CSSD and East 15 acting schools in the UK, and at Cours Florent in Paris, ITCA in Italy and Carnegie Mellon University in the USA.

## **Ric Mountjoy** (Lighting Designer)

Ric worked for many years at English National Opera and, before that, for Birmingham Royal Ballet. Recent lighting designs include: *What the Ladybird Heard* (national tour, Kenny Wax); *Spot's Birthday Party* (national tour, Kenny Wax and Nick Brooke) and *Bunny* by Jack Thorne (Edinburgh Fringe, London Soho and off-Broadway New York – winner of a Fringe First Award, and nabokov). He frequently lights

site-specific theatre for the company Slung Low including: *Pandemic* (Singapore International Festival); *They Only Come at Night: Visions* (Barbican BITE); *Anthology* (Liverpool Everyman) and *Beyond the Frontline* (The Lowry, Salford). He has also lit concerts for London Sinfonietta. Relights and work as associate LD include: *The Magic Flute* (London Coliseum, ENO; originally directed by Nick Hytner); *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* (West End and national tour) and *Terre Haute* by Edmund White (New York City). As production manager, he has taken shows on UK tours, and internationally to Australia and New York.

## **Nigel Hook** (Set Designer)

Nigel has designed a huge range of drama, musical and opera productions throughout the UK. Internationally, his work has been seen at Wermland Opera in Karlstad, Sweden; the Vienna English Theatre, and the Brits off Broadway season in New York.

West End credits include: *Spread a Little Happiness* (Whitehall); *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (Wyndham's); *Elegies for Angels, Punks and Raging Queens* (Criterion); *Ferry 'Cross the Mersey* (Lyric); *The Boys in the Band* (Aldwych); *Party and When Pigs Fly* (Arts); *Forbidden Broadway* (Albery); *Pageant* (Vaudeville) and *Steptoe and Son* (Comedy).

## **Becky Evans** (Costume Supervisor)

Becky trained at Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama. Her talent and skill for dressmaking saw her career take the natural route towards costume design and production, which she has been focusing on for the last few years, much to Becky's delight. Recent work includes: *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* (the Pleasance Theatre); *Bonnie and Clyde* (King's Head); *L'Orfeo* (Silent Opera) and *The Canterbury Tales* (Southwark Playhouse and UK tour).

## **Thomas Platt** (Stage Manager)

*The Play that Goes Wrong* will mark Thomas's debut as a West End stage manager. He is currently studying stage and costume management at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Thomas is also the stage and technical manager for Mischief Theatre.

## **Chris Currie** (Male Understudy)

Chris trained at the Guildhall School and graduated in July 2013. Prior to this, he was a member of the National Youth Theatre, where he appeared in their production of *Measure for Measure* for the European Capital of Culture celebrations. His roles during training included: Avram in *Rags*, Smike in *Nicholas Nickleby*, Astrov in *Uncle Vanya* and Mr Pinchwife in *The Country Wife*. Over Christmas, he played Chris in Reading Repertory Theatre's production of *The Nativity Goes Wrong* and is delighted to be back with Mischief Theatre Company for this exciting show.

## **Alys Metcalf** (Female Understudy)

Alys Metcalf studied at the Guildford School of Acting, gaining a first-class acting degree and winning the Graduate 'Performer' Prize. Whilst there, her performances, amongst many, included the role of Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Joan in *Plunder*. After graduating, her first appearance was as Beatrice in the Shakespeare's Globe Theatre's Sam Wanamaker Festival, followed by a performance in the Arcola Theatre's *Beyond the Mountain, Another Mountain*. She played the part of Cleo in *Oranges on the Brighton Line* at the Old Vic Tunnels and made her West End debut at the Trafalgar Studios in Lily Bevan's *Celebrity Night at Cafe Red*. She has motion-captured for the role of Theresa, voiced by Zoë Wanamaker for Microsoft's *Fable: the Journey* and was a competitor in Theatre Royal Stratford's Monologue Slam. Other work includes: Hodel in *Fiddler on the Roof* at Yvonne Arnaud; *The Jungle Book* at the Scoop Theatre and *Les Misérables* with Pimlico Opera Company. She also recorded the role of Sammy for the radio series *Bryony Brownwell's Mystery Project* for Fun Kids Radio.

Alys is the co-founder of Viscera Theatre Company, under the patronage of award-winning playwright Nick Payne, and a member of the Royal Court Young Writers' Programme. She is also singer in the Crouch End Festival Chorus, performing regularly at the Barbican Hall and on *The One Show* earlier last year.

## ABOUT MISCHIEF THEATRE

Mischief Theatre was founded in 2008 by a group of graduates of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and began as an improvised comedy group. Over the last five years the company has grown and developed into one of the country's leading comedy theatre companies. Mischief Theatre has toured the UK and internationally with improvised and original scripted work. The company is led by Artistic Director Henry Lewis and Company Director Jonathan Sayer.

For more information about Mischief Theatre please visit [mischieftheatre.co.uk](http://mischieftheatre.co.uk)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A huge thank you to everyone who made *The Play That Goes Wrong* possible and a special thanks to the cast, creative and production team for their creative input to the piece.

Our warmest thanks also goes to:

Adam Paulen, Kezia Lock, George & Sarah Kershaw, Richard Collins, Adam Meggido, Mike Bodie, Joshua Elliott, Bryony Corrigan, Niall Ransome, Harry Kershaw, Michael Green, Harriet Parsonage, LAMDA, Anthony Alderson, Cassandra Mathers, Dan O'Neil, Purple, Frankie Bell, Old Red Lion Theatre, Nicholas Thompson, Damien Devine, Scott Pryce-Jones, Bryony Myers, Trafalgar Studios, Charlie Longstaff, ATG, Mobius Industries, Dylan Emery, Raz Shaw, Steve Leask, Jo Tremelling, Dave & Janet Burke, Caroline Jenkins, Clive Lewis, Julia Worms, Tony & Christine Shields, Lucy Danser, Questors Theatre, Pleasance, Splinter, Sam Jenkins, Anna Brewer & Nicki Stoddart.

# **The Play That Goes Wrong**

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## **Production Notes**

*The stage direction ‘vamp’ denotes improvised dialogue or action to cover something.*

*An underlined letter in the text indicates a mispronunciation in that part of the word.*

*A forward slash denotes the next line / beginning midway through the current line.*

***Sandra’s** appearance from the clock in Act II should be achieved through having her secretly enter the long-case clock while it is being moved and another actress’s arm in the same costume reach through the door to ensure an instant teleportation effect.*

*The preshow and interval activity should be quiet, incidental and never draw the full attention of the audience.*

### **Actors** (in order of appearance)

***Annie** is the company’s stage manager, Lancashire accent*

***Stage Crew** the Cornley Polytechnic stage crew*

***Trevor** is the company’s lighting and sound operator*

***Chris** is the head of the drama society, directed the play and plays Inspector Carter*

***Jonathan** plays ‘Charles Haversham’*

***Robert** plays ‘Thomas Colleymoore’*

***Dennis** plays ‘Perkins’*

***Max** plays ‘Cecil Haversham’ and ‘Arthur’*

***Sandra** plays ‘Florence Colleymoore’*

*The action takes place on opening night of the Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society’s production of the murder mystery play – ‘Murder at Haversham Manor’ written by Susie H.K. Brideswell.*

**Characters** (in order of appearance)

**Charles Haversham** *deceased*

**Thomas Colleymoore** *Charles's old school friend*

**Perkins** *Charles's butler*

**Cecil Haversham** *Charles's brother*

**Florence Colleymoore** *Charles's fiancée and Thomas's sister*

**Inspector Carter** *an esteemed local inspector*

**Arthur** *the gardener at Haversham Manor*

*The action takes place in Charles's private rooms at Haversham Manor on the evening of Charles and Florence's engagement party. Winter 1922.*



## Act One

*The setting is the private rooms of Charles Haversham; a young, wealthy man of the period. The rooms occupy a whole wing of 'Haversham Manor' and are split onto two levels. The ground floor consists of a carpeted lounge area. There is one door centre stage with the funnel of a voice-pipe and a barometer hanging on either side of the door and a long-case clock standing to the left of it. A large heraldic shield hangs above the door with two swords lain across it. There is a large window in the centre of the stage with red velvet curtains closed over it. A chaise longue stands downstage centre, a small table stage right with a telephone and a vase on it. There is a fireplace stage right with a portrait of a dog hanging above it and a coal scuttle standing in the hearth.*

*On the upper level we see a study area complete with bookshelves stage right stacked with heavy leather-bound volumes and papers, Charles's bureau beneath a small window with a chair set at it next to a globe-shaped drinks trolley. There is a door to the stage left side of the upper level leading to a back staircase. A large trophy plaque hangs on one side of the door and another funnel of the voice-pipe hangs on the other. There is a small safe built into the upstage door.*

*The two floors are connected by an old-fashioned elevator stage left, doors closed on the lower and upper levels.*

### **PRESHOW ACTIVITY:**

*As the audience enter **Annie** (the Stage Manager) kneels by the fireplace trying to attach a mantelpiece to it. **Annie** realises she can't hold it and nail at the same time. **Annie** fetches an audience member to hold it in position. **Annie** continues to try to nail it on. **Annie** disappears around the back of the flats to fetch something leaving the audience member standing there with the mantelpiece. The audience member hears voices from behind the flat. (**Annie** saying 'Mind your fingers, drill bit coming through', **Trevor** saying 'have you used that before?', **Annie** saying 'no'). A drilling noise is heard from behind the flat. Then silence. **Annie** eventually reappears and the audience member is sent back to their seat, the mantelpiece is still not attached.*

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*Two members of **Stage Crew** search the stalls and circle for a missing Duran Duran CD with torches. **Trevor** stands in the stalls on his radio, he tells two members of the audience that they are sat beneath a faulty stage light.*

*House music drops to a lower level and the house lights dim.*

**Trevor** (over the speakers) Good evening, ladies and gentlemen and welcome to this evening's performance of The Murder at Haversham Manor. Can I kindly request that you switch off your mobile telephones and other electronic devices, and please note photography of any kind is strictly prohibited. Also if anyone finds a Duran Duran CD box set in the auditorium, I need that back; please hand it to one of the ushers at the end of the performance. Enjoy the show.

*House lights go fully out. Silence.*

**Trevor** (over the speakers) Alright, stand by for act one, note for the cast, the dog is still missing, we need to find him before his entrance . . .

**Chris** Trevor! Trevor! Wrong button . . .

*Sound cuts off. **Annie** still hasn't finished the mantelpiece. **Chris** enters from around the back of the flats in the darkness.*

**Chris** Leave it. Just leave it.

**Annie** We need . . .

**Chris** We haven't got time.

***Annie** hurries off behind the flat taking the mantelpiece and tools with her. Spotlight comes up and cuts off **Chris**'s head, he steps into it.*

**Chris** Good evening, ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the Cornley Polytechnic Society's spring production of The Murder at Haversham Manor.

I would like to personally welcome you to what will be my directorial debut, and my first production as head of the drama society.

We are particularly excited to present this play because, for the first time in the society's history, we have managed to find a play that fits the company's numbers perfectly. If we're honest a lack of numbers has hampered past productions, such as last year's Chekov play; Two Sisters, or last Christmas's The Lion and The Wardrobe, and of course our summer musical Cat.

Of course, this is the first time the society has been able to afford to hire a venue so large and indeed I would like to thank my grandfather Timothy Jameson whose legacy has made this evening's performance possible. May he rest in peace. Indeed it's been a breath of fresh air to not have to contend with a small budget, as we had to in last year's presentation of Roald Dahl's James and the Peach. Of course, during the run of that particular show the peach went off, and we were forced to present a hastily devised alternative entitled James! Where's your Peach?

Finally, we've managed to stage a play as it should be, and cast it exceptionally well. I'm sure no one will forget the problems we've faced with casting before, such as 2010's Christmas presentation of Snow White and the Tall, Broad Gentlemen, or indeed our previous year's pantomime, another Disney classic, Ugly . . . and the Beast.

But now, on with the main event, which I am confident will be our best show yet! So without any further ado, please put your hands together for Susie H.K. Brideswell's thrilling whodunit – The Murder at Haversham Manor.

**Chris** *exits into the wings and the stage lights fade to black.*

**Jonathan** *(playing Charles Haversham) enters through the darkness. He loudly collides with the table. The lights suddenly come up on Jonathan. He freezes. The lights go out again. Jonathan takes up his position, dead, on the chaise longue, arm outstretched onto the floor. The lights come up again just before he's fully in position. Robert* *(playing Thomas Colley Moore) and Dennis* *(playing Perkins the Butler) can be heard off, approaching the downstairs door.*

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**Robert** (*off*) Charley! Are you ready? We're all waiting downstairs to raise a glass to your engagement! Charley?

**Robert** *knocks on the door.*

**Robert** (*off*) Come along now, Charley, you've been in there for hours now. If I didn't know better I'd say you were having second thoughts about the wedding. (*Chuckles.*) Hang it all, Charley, if you won't come out, I'll come in! (*Tries handle.*) Damn it! He's locked the door. Hand me those keys, Perkins.

**Dennis** (*off*) Here they are, Mr Colley Moore.

**Robert** (*off*) Thank you, Perkins. Let's get this door open. We're coming in, Charley! We're coming in!

**Robert** *goes to open the door, but it won't budge.*

**Robert** (*off*) There we are. We're in.

**Robert** and **Dennis** *dart around the side of the set to enter.*

**Robert** But, what's this? Charles, unconscious?

**Dennis** Asleep surely, Mr Colley Moore?

**Robert** Damn it, Perkins, I hope so.

**Dennis** I'll take his pulse.

**Dennis** *takes Jonathan's pulse on the side of his face.*

**Robert** Blast! I knew something was wrong, it's so unlike Charles to disappear like this.

**Dennis** Sir, he's dead!

*Lights snap to red. Dramatic musical spike. Lights snap back to general state.*

**Robert** Dead?! Damn it, Perkins, he can't be! He's my closest friend!

**Dennis** He's not breathing, sir, and there's no hint of a heartbeat!

**Robert** I'm dumbfounded! He was right as rain an hour ago.

**Robert** *crosses in front of the chaise longue, treading on Jonathan's outstretched hand.*

**Dennis** I don't understand. He was a fit as a fiddle. He can't be dead. It doesn't make sense.

**Robert** Of course it makes sense. He's been murdered!

*Lights change to red again. The same dramatic musical spike. Lights change back to general state.*

**Robert** Good God; where's Florence?

**Dennis** In the dining room, sir, shall I fetch her?

**Robert** At once, Perkins!

**Dennis** But she's bound to have one of her hysterical episodes, sir!

**Robert** Damn it! Gather everyone in here! Charles! Dead! What a horror!

**Dennis** *rushes to the voice-pipe on the wall and calls to the rest of the house.* **Robert** *removes his jacket.*

**Dennis** *(into the voice-pipe, echoing)* Lounge to dining room! Quickly! Miss Colley Moore! Cecil! Come up to Charles's rooms at once! There's been a disaster! Charles Haversham has been murdered!

**Robert** But do you think it was murder, Perkins?

**Robert** *hangs his jacket up on a hook on the wall, the hook and his jacket falls to the floor.*

**Robert** Or do you think perhaps it was suicide?

**Dennis** Suicide! Mr Haversham? Not possible! There never was a man with more zest for life than Charles Haversham! He was young, rich and soon to be married, why on earth would he commit suicide?

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**Robert** But why on earth would anyone murder him? Charles was such gentle fellow.

**Dennis** He was generous, kind, a true . . . (*Reads the word from his hand and mispronounces it.*) philanthropist. He never had an enemy in his life.

**Robert** Until today it seems.

**Dennis** Mr Haversham was murdered in cold blood in this very room on this very day, in this very room! (*Realises his mistake.*) Shall I telephone the police?

**Robert** The police? They wouldn't make it out here for days in this snowstorm. (*Opens the curtains to reveal falling paper snowflakes. Closes the curtains again.*) I'll telephone Inspector Carter, he lives just the other side of the village, (*Picks up receiver.*) He'll be here in next to no time. Hand me the receiver, Perkins.

**Robert** *realises he already has the receiver.*

**Robert** Thank you, Perkins.

**Dennis** *sits on Jonathan's leg.*

**Robert** Good evening. Give me Inspector Carter! . . . I know it's late! . . . Damn it, I don't care about the weather. There's been a murder! Someone's murdered Charles Haversham!

*Lights change to red. A musical spike plays again. The spike plays for far too long. Eventually the lights change back to general state.*

**Robert** That's right!

**Trevor** (*over the speakers*) Sound effect error on cue four.

**Robert** Thank you. (*Hangs up.*) He's on his way.

**Dennis** Inspector Carter?

**Robert** They say he's best damn inspector in the district, he'll crack this case and quick.

**Dennis** Very good, sir, and what shall I do?

**Robert** Lock every door, man!

**Robert** *crosses the stage again. Jonathan sharply moves his hand out of the way of Robert's foot. Jonathan replaces his hand.*

**Dennis** *treads on it.*

**Robert** Not a soul gets out of Haversham Manor until the killer is found!

**Dennis** At once, sir.

**Robert** . . . and assemble everyone in here.

**Dennis** Right away, sir!

**Dennis** *goes to leave through the door, but it still won't budge. He opens the front of the long case clock next to the door and gets inside instead.*

**Robert** Good God! Charles Haversham murdered at his own engagement party! (*Turns sharply to the door.*) Florence!

**Sandra** *tries to get through the door.*

**Sandra** (*off*) Charley!

**Robert** Florence, I'm sorry you had to find out this way.

**Sandra** (*off*) No! I can't believe what I'm seeing.

**Sandra** *is heard running up the offstage stairs and enters through the upstairs door.*

**Sandra** His skin is cold to the touch.

**Robert** No, don't touch him, Florence!

**Sandra** I must!

**Robert** You mustn't!

**Sandra** Unhand me, you controlling brute!

**Robert** *pretends to release Sandra's hand.*

**Robert** That is no way to speak to your brother, Florence! Perkins was right, you're becoming hysterical. You must take some of your medication. Where does Charley hide it?

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**Robert** *opens the long case clock to reveal* **Dennis** *standing inside.*  
**Dennis** *hands* **Robert** *a pillbox.*

**Robert** (*ad libs*) Thank you, Perkins.

**Robert** *closes the door. He opens the pillbox and throws the pills up to* **Sandra** *on the higher level, hitting her in the eye.*

**Sandra** No, Tom, no more of those ghastly pills!

**Robert** Take them, Florence

**Sandra** I hate these pills.

**Robert** Come along, Florence!

**Sandra** It's revolting!

**Robert** Take your medication, girl!

**Sandra** You're an animal, Thomas!

**Robert** This is the thanks I get for trying to look after my little sister.

**Sandra** Oh Tom, please! There's a difference between looking after your sister and keeping her prisoner. I'm like a beautiful bird trapped in a gilded cage.

**Robert** Don't be so melodramatic, Florence. You're an impressionable young girl and you don't always know what's best for you.

**Sandra** Oh, who could do such a thing! The night of our engagement party! Cecil! Quick! Your brother's dead!

**Dennis** *emerges from the long case clock.*

**Dennis** This way, Master Haversham!

**Max** (*off*) I'm coming, Miss Colley Moore!

**Max** *enters through the door without difficulty. Seeing this* **Sandra** *exits through the upstairs door and is heard running down the offstage stairs and appears behind* **Max** *in the downstairs doorway.*

**Max** Brother? Dead! It can't be!



**Robert** Calm yourself Cecil. Pour him a stiff drink, Perkins.

**Dennis** Right away sir! Charles always kept scotch upstairs in his study.

**Dennis** *gets into the elevator carriage. The elevator rises to the upper level and* **Dennis** *emerges and walks over to the drinks trolley.*

**Max** Charles had the best collection of Scotch in the county.

**Robert** Don't you think I know that, Cecil, he was my best friend.

**Max** Well, he was my brother.

**Robert** Hang it all, my sister's fiancé dead!

**Sandra** I can't bear it.

**Robert** Florence, you aren't to leave my sight this evening!

**Dennis** *opens the drinks cabinet and seizes a full bottle of Scotch and holds it up.*

**Dennis** Oh my God! He's drunk the whole bottle! (**Dennis** *speaks into the voice-pipe.*) There's not a drop left!

**Dennis** *realises and tries to get rid of the Scotch, pouring it out into the voice-pipe.*

**Robert** (*into the voice pipe*) Hang it all, ther . . .

*The Scotch spurts out of Robert's end of the voice-pipe all over him. He quickly grabs the coal scuttle and catches the liquid inside.*

**Dennis** There's not a drop left! (*The bottle is now empty.*)

**Robert** (*into the voice-pipe*) Hang it all! There'll be another in the cabinet!

**Dennis** (*into the voice pipe*) Of course, sir!

**Dennis** *produces the empty bottle he should have got the first time.*

**Dennis** Yes, this one is full!

**Robert** This is horrifying! I mean, who on earth would have a motivation to murder Charles Haversham?

## 14 The Play That Goes Wrong

**Dennis** *puts it onto a tray along with four glasses. Dennis descends in the elevator and walks past the window. As he passes the window Annie leans through and exchanges the empty bottle for a full plastic bottle of white spirit, with a large flammable symbol on it. He doesn't see the switch, but then sees the fresh bottle and is baffled by this.*

**Sandra** I can't imagine!

**Max** It's madness! My brother was a good man! Who would kill him? I'm in shock, Thomas.

**Robert** As am I, Cecil! As am I!

**Sandra** It's more than my nerves can take! I'm becoming hysterical!

**Robert** No, Florence! Not one of your episodes! Calm yourself. Allow your pills to take effect.

**Max** Florence! Don't lose your head!

**Sandra** *begins to scream and pound Jonathan's chest. Jonathan flinches.*

**Robert** Easy, Florence!

**Max** No, Florence! This is unbearable!

**Sandra** Charley! How will I go on!

**Robert** Calm yourself! Remember your breathing.

**Max** I feel I shall pass out, Thomas!

**Robert** Perkins! Pour that man a stiff drink!

**Dennis** *hands a glass to Max.*

**Max** Thank you, Perkins.

**Dennis** *pours the 'Scotch' into Max's glass. Sandra becomes calmer.*

**Robert** There, there, Florence, well done, deep breaths.

**Sandra** It's terrible! Just a week after our engagement!

**Max** He was a good brother.

**Max** *drinks the white spirit. He suddenly spits it back out.*

**Max** That's the best Scotch I've ever tasted!

**Robert** Have another, to calm your nerves.

**Max** Make it a double!

**Dennis** *pours another glass of white spirit. Max drinks it again. It is horrible again.*

**Sandra** Oh! My Charles! My Charles! My head is spinning!

**Max** Calm down, Florence.

**Dennis** Another Scotch, sir?

**Max** Yes!

**Sandra** I can't believe Charles was sat in here alone, drinking, when he was supposed to be downstairs with us.

**Max** My brother wasn't as happy as he led people to believe. Underneath that cheerful mask lay a darker side to the man that many didn't know about.

**Dennis** It's true, his smile was often just a (*Reads from his hand.*) façade. I was fortunate enough to be one of the only people he truly confided in. I've lost a real friend today.

**Robert** We all have, Perkins. You know, in the twenty years I've known Charley I never once set foot inside these private rooms.

**Max** Charles was a mysterious and reticent man who never enjoyed his privacy being intruded upon. I wouldn't be surprised if his rooms hold more secrets than we know.

*A gust of wind is heard over the speakers and the window swings. All react. Robert crosses and closes the window.*

**Robert** Nonsense! I've heard more rumours than I can bear about Charles's secret rooms and hidden passageways. It's all bluff and bluster. Isn't that right, Perkins?

**Dennis** I shall take my master's secrets to the grave, sir.

**Sandra** I don't know how I'll ever recover from this.

**Robert** You'll move back home with me. I'm your brother and I'll have it no other way.

**Max** Perkins is right, my brother was hiding a deep sense of melancholy and resentment. There's no doubt in my mind, it was suicide.

**Dennis** Suicide, Mr Haversham? How can you say that! Of course not; it's murder! Murder in the first degree!

**Max** Nonsense, the man was paranoid, jealous and I can prove it! Perkins, hand me his journal from the mantelpiece!

*Annie's hand reaches around the side of the set and holds the journal in position above the fireplace. Dennis passes it to Max.*

**Max** Why, look at the last entry. *(Not looking at the journal.)* 'I fear Florence does not love me. The night of our engagement party; despair engulfs my soul.'

**Sandra** But I love Charles with all my heart!

*Max returns the journal to the mantelpiece; it falls straight to the floor. Annie's hand reaches through the window to try to catch it but she misses.*

**Max** As I said! Driven mad with paranoia and jealousy.

*All gasp and suddenly face out. Silence. The cast wait for a sound effect that doesn't happen. Eventually a loud door chime sounds, late.*

**All** *(react)* The inspector!

**Sandra** Thank heavens he's here!

**Chris** *(playing 'Inspector Carter')* enters through the door, covered in paper snowflakes, carrying an attaché case.

**Chris** What a terrible snowstorm. Good evening, I'm Inspector Carter. Take my case.

**Dennis** Yes, Inspector.

**Chris** *hands his case to Dennis, who places it on the floor by the table.*

**Chris** This must be Charles Haversham! I'm sorry; this must've given you all a damn shock.

**Sandra** It did, we're all still reeling!

**Chris** Naturally. Are any of you the deceased's immediate family?

**Max** I'm Cecil Haversham. I'm his brother.

**Sandra** *(smiling)* I'm Florence Colley Moore. I'm his fiancée. Tonight was our engagement party.

**Chris** What a damn sad thing. I take it everyone is assembled in here?

**Robert** Yes. The only other member of staff is Arthur the gardener. I saw him and Winston leaving for the weekend, hours ago.

**Chris** Winston?

**Robert** His guard dog.

**Chris** I see. Very well. You! Have you poured everyone a stiff drink?

**Dennis** Yes, Inspector.

**Dennis** *holds out the tray and they all take a glass. Dennis removes the tray knocking Jonathan on the head.*

**Max** Let us raise a glass to the man we all loved. To Charles.

**All** Charles!

*They All drink the white spirit. They gag, spit it out and recover.*

**Chris** Delicious.

**Sandra** Excellent.

**Robert** Lovely.

**Chris** Listen, you all must be distraught, but forgive me, the sooner I can begin my enquiries, the sooner we can all get to the bottom of this ghastly business.

**Chris** *deposits his notebook on the table.*

**Chris** (to **Dennis**) If you'd be so kind as to bring the body up to the study, so I can examine it.

**Dennis** Yes, Inspector.

**Robert** I'll lend you a hand, Perkins.

**Chris** Then lock all the doors to the house and prepare this room, I'll conduct my enquiries down here afterwards.

**Dennis** Inspector.

*Over the next few lines **Dennis** brings in a stretcher. **Robert** and **Dennis** try to lift **Jonathan** onto the stretcher but can't. They roll him off of the chaise longue onto the floor.*

**Max** Any ideas on the cause of death, Inspector?

**Chris** Could be a number of things. Suffocation, strangulation, poison. Before fully examining the body I wouldn't like to say.

**Sandra** How could someone do it?!

**Chris** Try not to think about it, Miss Colley Moore. Once I've finished downstairs I'll speak to you each individually and then perhaps you can get some space to calm your nerves.

**Robert** and **Dennis** *lift the stretcher up, the canvas tears off the stretcher and **Robert** and **Dennis** are left holding just the poles. They carry just the poles off through the door.*

**Sandra** Thank you, Inspector, this is all more than I can bear.

**Chris** I'll return presently, as soon as I've finished examining the body.

**Chris** exits, shutting the door behind him. **Jonathan** realises that he is meant to have been carried off and slowly starts to get up trying not to be seen and exits towards the door, dragging the stretcher canvas with him. **Sandra** and **Max** stare at **Jonathan** as he slowly leaves through the door and shuts it behind him, getting the stretcher canvas caught in the door. **Jonathan** pulls the canvas through the crack in the door, the last bit of it gets stuck; he tugs at it, causing the door to swing open revealing him. **Sandra** closes the door.

**Max** Thank God they've gone!

**Robert** and **Dennis** enter through the upstairs door carrying just the stretcher poles.

**Robert** Good lord, Perkins, his body weighs a ton!

**Chris** So this is Charles's study. Set the body down there, gentlemen.

**Dennis** It's such a tragedy for a man to die just three months before he is to be married.

**Robert** and **Dennis** deposit the poles on the floor by the downstage edge of the upper level.

**Robert** I can't stand it. Just look at him lying there.

**Dennis** Such a pained countenance.

**Robert** Indeed.

**Chris** Close his damn eyes, Perkins.

**Dennis** closes the eyes on an imagined corpse. Focus shifts downstairs.

**Sandra** Cecil! We must tread carefully! It would be easy for the two of us to become implicated in Charles's death. If they find out about us, we'll be suspects!

**Max** You and I are having an affair, so what? It doesn't mean we killed him.

**Sandra** Of course not! But that's what the Inspector will think!

**Max** It's fine, we'll just carry on as if everything's just as it was.

**Max** *sits on the chaise longue and discovers a ledger under the cushions. In confusion Max moves it under the chaise longue.*

**Max** Except now you won't be forced to marry my beastly brother.

**Sandra** And soon we can be together and not keep secrets.

**Max** But please, while we're here, just the two of us, let me steal one quick kiss!

**Sandra** Cecil, we can't! If we're caught it would be the end!

*Focus shifts upstairs.*

**Dennis** It's so strange to think of Charles being dead. He was such an influence on all our lives.

**Jonathan** *opens the upstairs door and creeps in to take up his position dead again.*

**Robert** It almost feels as though he's still alive in the room with us.

**Dennis** His stillness unnerves me.

**Chris** Seeing a cadaver for the first time can be unsettling, Perkins.

**Chris** *sees Jonathan and flinches.*

**Chris** I need you to pull yourself together and help me to dust his personal belongings for fingerprints.

**Dennis** Of course, Inspector.

**Chris** *produces a tin of powder and a brush. He passes Dennis the tin.*

**Chris** Check his pockets, Thomas.

**Jonathan** *reaches into his pocket and produces a letter and passes it to Robert.*



**Robert** (*ad libs*) Thank you, Charles.

**Chris** And now to dust the body for fingerprints.

**Robert** What was that?

**Dennis** Sir?

**Robert** I could have sworn I just saw him breathing.

**Dennis** Breathing, si . . .

**Dennis** *drops the tin of powder covering Jonathan's face causing him to cough loudly.*

**Chris** Nonsense, Colleymoore! This man is dead!

**Dennis** He's cold and lifeless.

**Robert** You're right, dead and gone.

*Focus shifts downstairs. Jonathan continues to cough.*

**Max** Please, Florence! One kiss! I can't resist you! I can't control myself!

**Sandra** Oh Cecil, I would if I could but it's too damn risky! We must act aloof.

**Jonathan** *coughs again and slips off the edge of the upper level and grabs the rug and slowly sinks down to the lower level.*

**Max** But Florence, we are completely alone.

**Jonathan** *slowly gets up and moves back out towards the door. Exits.*

**Max** There is no one else here.

**Sandra** Oh Cecil, you are persuasive!

*Focus shifts upstairs.*

**Chris** Thank you, gentlemen. Now we have looked over the body, perhaps you would take it out to the service quarters for the coroner to collect in the morning.

**Dennis** Of course, Inspector.

**Robert and Dennis** *lift the stretcher poles up and carry them out of the upstairs door.*

**Chris** Check all of the doors are locked, Perkins.

**Dennis** Inspector.

**Chris** And Colley Moore, perhaps you could fetch me a pencil and my notebook from downstairs.

**Robert** Naturally.

**Robert and Dennis** *exit, the focus shifts downstairs.*

**Sandra** Perhaps one kiss then . . . One stolen moment of passion.

**Max** Florence! Come into my arms.

**Sandra** I shall!

**Max** One embrace!

**Sandra** Oh, Cecil! I love . . .

**Robert** *bursts in.*

**Robert** The Inspector requires a pencil! What on earth's going on in here?

**Sandra** Sorry, I felt flustered! Cecil was cooling my brow!

**Max** Just cooling her brow.

**Robert** I don't see how my sister's brow is any business of yours, Haversham!

**Sandra** Don't be a prig, Tom; Cecil was only trying to help.

**Max** Yes, Tom.

**Robert** Very well, if you'll excuse me, I have the pencil.

**Robert** *sees that there is no pencil. In a panic he grabs the set of keys. Robert exits, closing door.*

**Max** Thank God he's gone! That man's such a nuisance!

**Sandra** He is my brother!

**Max** Let me kiss you! Just once!

**Sandra** Oh, Cecil! Kiss me a thousand times! I'm yours!

**Dennis** *bursts in again.*

**Dennis** Sorry to disturb you, Miss Colleymoore, Mr Haversham. I've come to collect the keys to lock us all inside.

**Max** They're by the telephone, Perkins.

**Dennis** *sees the keys gone and instead he takes the Inspector's notebook.*

**Dennis** I shall lock the doors at once.

**Dennis** *exits with the Inspector's notebook.*

**Sandra** You don't think Perkins suspects us, do you?

**Max** That old fool, of course not.

**Sandra** Oh, enough words! Take me!

**Robert** *bursts in.*

**Robert** I forgot the Inspector's notebook . . . what in God's name!

**Sandra** I was about to faint! Cecil caught me!

**Robert** You know, Cecil; I don't appreciate you trying to get your hands on my sister on the night of her fiancé's death.

**Max** You ought to take better care of her then, Colleymoore.

**Sandra** I'm overcome!

**Robert** I haven't time for this! Now I have the Inspector's notebook, I'll be on my way.

**Robert** *sees the notebook to be gone. He takes the vase instead and exits.*

**Max** Blasted interruptions!

**Sandra** Kiss me, Cecil!

**Max** I want you, Florence! You make my heart beat out of my chest!

**Sandra** Your eyes send me into a dream! Kiss me, Cecil, I can't wait a second longer!

*Pause. Dennis is supposed to have burst in. They look at the door. Vamp. Eventually Max kisses Sandra intensely, just then Dennis bursts in late, holding two candlesticks.*

**Dennis** Sorry to interrupt again, Mr Haversham, Miss Colley Moore. I've come to prepare the room.

**Max** Thank you, Perkins. Put them on the mantelpiece.

*Dennis walks to the mantelpiece with the candlesticks. He goes to put them down and Annie leans through the fireplace and holds the mantelpiece in position. A fireplace decoration slips down and reveals Annie's face, she stares out at the others.*

**Max** At last we're alone.

*Annie continues to stare awkwardly from the fireplace.*

**Sandra** Oh, Cecil! Let's run away from here! Far away! Together!

**Max** Soon, my love, but we must be careful. We mustn't arouse suspicion.

**Sandra** Cecil, tell me, who do you think killed Charles?

**Max** There's no question in my mind, Florence, he was killed by your brother, Thomas Colley Moore!

**Sandra** My brother! What a devil of a situation this is!

**Jonathan** *suddenly bursts through the door holding a gun.*

**Jonathan** Not so fast, Inspector!

**Max and Sandra** *stare at Jonathan, who realises he has come in much too early and hurriedly exits.*

**Sandra** But, why would Thomas want Charles dead?

**Max** Isn't it obvious? He was always bitter and possessive when it came to you! He didn't like the idea of his best friend marrying his sister. He saw you together at tonight's engagement party and it drove him half mad and he snapped and killed Charles!

**Sandra** But, if it is Thomas, what if our affair is discovered?

**Max** I don't think there's any doubt. He would try and kill us, just like he killed Charles!

**Sandra** Oh, I feel faint again!

**Max** Don't worry, Florence! Just follow my lead . . .

**Chris** *enters the elevator, and emerges on the lower level.*

**Chris** I'm sorry to have kept you, but now I have inspected the body and Charles's study more closely, our interviews can proceed. (*Calls through the door.*) Perkins! Bring in Charles's personal effects.

**Dennis** *enters with lots of bulky personal props including a letter.*

**Dennis** Where would you like them, Inspector?

**Chris** Set them down on the mantelpiece.

**Dennis** As you wish, Inspector.

**Chris** *realises what he's said. Dennis carries the props over to Annie, who is still holding up the mantelpiece. Dennis hands her the items carefully. Annie struggles under the weight of the mantelpiece throughout the next exchange.*

*Silence. Dennis is supposed to leave but doesn't.*

**Chris** Don't go, Perkins.

**Dennis** *goes to leave and then stops. He sits down on the chaise longue.*

**Chris** I'd like to ask you a few questions first. Mr Haversham, Miss Colley Moore, perhaps you'd be so kind as to give us a moment's privacy.

**Max** Naturally.

**Max** and **Sandra** exit through the stage right door.

**Chris** Don't just stand there, Perkins. Take a seat.

**Dennis** remains seated. He takes out a cigarette case.

**Dennis** May I?

**Chris** Go ahead. How are you feeling, Perkins?

**Dennis** A little shaken, sir, but I'll be fine.

**Dennis** goes to light himself a cigarette, he burns his hand and drops the match into the coal scuttle where it ignites the Scotch.

**Annie** is alarmed by the fire and drops all of the props loudly onto the floor. Terrified she rushes off into the wings.

**Chris** You were close with Charles Haversham?

**Dennis** Yes, sir, very close.

**Chris** You don't appear very upset by his death.

**Dennis** On the contrary, I've barely taken it in. Oh, he was such a kindly, charming man.

**Chris** It's true.

**Dennis** You met him?

**Chris** Once, briefly at the local police station, he . . .

**Robert** leans through the window with a fire extinguisher and puts out the fire. **Robert** realises he's been seen.

**Robert** (*ad libs*) Evening, Inspector. We require the coal in the library.

**Robert** withdraws carrying the coal scuttle with him.

**Chris** Once, briefly at the local police station, he . . .

**Robert** (*off*) Of course they didn't notice.

**Chris** . . . police station, he came in . . .

**Robert** (*off*) I ad libbed.

**Chris** He came in as a consultant on a fraud case I was working on.

**Dennis** I see.

**Chris** How long have you been working at Haversham Manor?

**Dennis** Eighty years.

**Chris** Eighty/ years?

**Dennis** (*corrects himself*) Eight years.

**Chris** Eight years. And have you enjoyed your time here?

**Dennis** My time with Mr Haversham has been nothing but a joy, I feel that since I've come here I have been seen not only as a butler but also as a friend and a confidant. If you need me I'll be in my quarters, exits.

**Chris** Exits.

**Dennis** Exits.

*Silence. Dennis realises and turns to go.*

**Chris** If you'd be so kind as to send in Florence Colleymoore on your way out.

**Sandra** *bursts in followed by Robert. Dennis exits.*

**Sandra** No need, I'm already here! Don't ask too much of me, Inspector, I feel fragile as glass.

**Robert** Don't harass her, Carter; I needn't remind you my sister's been through a lot tonight. Her fiancé did pass away this evening.

**Chris** At last, Colleymoore, you found me a pencil?

**Robert** Yes, Inspector.

*Hands Chris the keys.*

**Chris** . . . and my notebook?

*Hands Chris the vase.*

**Chris** I knew I'd left them somewhere. Now I must to speak to Miss Colley Moore alone.

**Robert** Very well. I'll be in the library, Florence.

**Robert** *exits.* **Chris** *questions Sandra* *making notes with the keys and vase.*

**Chris** Don't fret, Miss Colley Moore, my questions will be brief and to the point and then you can get some rest. Firstly, how old are you, Miss Colley Moore?

**Sandra** Twenty-one.

**Chris** I'll make a note of that. (*Tries to make a note on the vase.*) When were you and your fiancé due to be married?

**Sandra** In the new year.

**Chris** *writes on vase again.*

**Chris** When did you first meet?

**Sandra** Only seven months ago but my brother has known him since school, he introduced us at a local gala and it was love at first sight. I knew from the very first moment I saw him that he was the man I wished to marry.

**Chris** Well, I think that's enough note taking for now.

**Sandra** *comes in a line too early.*

**Sandra** When you love someone there's no such thing as rushing, Inspector.

**Chris** Did you ever think you were rushing into this marriage?

**Sandra** Why wouldn't I love him?

**Chris** . . . did you love him, then?

**Sandra** How could anyone have benefitted?



**Chris** Can you think of anyone who might have benefitted from your fiancé's death?

**Sandra** Cecil?!

**Chris** Not even Cecil?

**Sandra** I wasn't having an affair! Don't raise your voice to me, Inspector!

**Chris** YOU WERE HAVING AN AFFAIR!

**Sandra** (*slaps Chris*) Don't tell me to calm down!

**Chris** Calm down, Miss Colleymoore. (*Reacts to slap.*)

**Sandra** Which letter?

**Chris** Then how do you explain this letter?

*Annie has taken the letter off and she passes it back through the fireplace.*

**Sandra** You've read my letter? Where did you find it?

**Chris** I'll tell you which letter! The one addressed to Cecil, written in your hand, declaring your love for him and how the thought of marrying Charles repulsed you.

**Sandra** Charles read it . . .

**Chris** (*does Sandra's line for her, high voice*) You've read my letter? Where did you find it? (*Back to his normal voice.*) I'll tell you where I found it! In Charles's pocket!

**Sandra** Charles read it?! Then it was suicide!

**Chris** Indeed! Or a murder, conceived by yourself and Cecil Haversham so you could run away together!

**Sandra** How dare you! You diabolical beast! How can you? I won't stand for this, Inspector! Accuse me again and you'll be sor . . .

**Robert** *bursts in followed by Max, the door hits Sandra sharply on the head and she collapses, unconscious.*

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**Robert** What's all this shouting!

**Max** What is this, Inspector?

*All register that **Sandra** is on the floor.*

**Chris** I'm merely interviewing Miss Colley Moore, nothing more.

**Max** Florence, calm down, stop shouting!

**Sandra** *remains unconscious.*

**Robert** She's having one of her episodes. Snap out of it, you're hysterical!

**Sandra** *remains unconscious.*

**Max** Florence! Where are you going?

**Sandra** *remains unconscious.*

**Robert** Come back here this instant!

**Sandra** *remains unconscious.*

**Robert** She's run off. I'll fetch her back. You stay here, Cecil, I daresay the Inspector has some questions for you; you were Charles's brother after all.

**Robert** *exits.*

**Max** I'm sorry, Inspector, she's badly shaken, we all are. It's been quite a night and it's getting late.

**Chris** (*looks at clock*) Eleven o'clock already.

*The clock says 5:30.*

**Max** Well, Inspector? Do you have any questions for me?

**Robert** *peers through the curtains to see if **Sandra** is alright.*

**Chris** Oh yes, Mr Haversham, similar questions to those I asked Miss Colley Moore.

**Max** Fire away, Inspector, I'm at your service.

**Chris** Indeed. You and your brother, did you get along well?

**Max** Up and down. Since Father died there was rather more strain on our relationship; it was no secret our father cared for Charles more than myself.

**Chris** I see, this is your father in the portrait, is it not?

*It's the painting of a dog.*

**Max** It is.

**Chris** He looks the spit of Charles, doesn't he?

**Max** He did ever since he was quite young.

**Chris** You were the junior by four years?

**Max** Almost four, yes . . .

**Robert, Jonathan and Annie** peer through the curtain together to see if **Sandra** is alright.

**Max** And didn't I know it, Charles patronised and embarrassed me throughout our entire childhood. He always thought he knew best, and Father always took his side. If he ever didn't get his way, he was unbearable.

*Now Annie, Robert and Jonathan all reach through the window and start to lift Sandra out under the curtains.*

**Chris** He sounds far from the ideal brother. In fact it sounds like you hated one another.

**Max** I won't lie, Inspector, Charles and I never truly saw eye to eye, but if you're suggesting I had something to do with his murder, you're mistaken.

**Chris** I see. It's a dark night, Cecil.

**Chris** *pulls the curtains open revealing Robert, Annie and Jonathan. They all freeze and try not to be seen. Sandra is held unconscious, in an awkward position.*

**Max** Inspector?

**Chris** You can barely even make out the trees.

**Max** What are you saying, Inspector?

**Chris** I'm saying, Cecil, that tonight would be the perfect night for you to murder your brother.

**Chris and Max** *turn back downstage.* **Robert, Annie and Jonathan** *continue to remove Sandra.*

**Max** Inspector, please, me and my brother had our differences, but deep down we cared for one another . . .

**Chris** (*offhand*) And yet you had an affair with his fiancée?

**Robert, Annie and Jonathan** *drop Sandra and start again.*

**Max** . . . what on earth gave you that idea?

**Chris** The letter I found in Charles's pocket from Miss Colley Moore to yourself.

**Max** (*shaken*) You know about that?

**Chris** As it seems, did Charles.

**Robert, Annie and Jonathan** *have managed to get Sandra out of the window. Annie pulls the curtains shut.*

**Robert** (*off*) No, they didn't notice.

**Max** Well . . . Bravo, Inspector! Very good. You've found out about Florence and I, but it proves nothing. We didn't have a thing to do with Charles's murder, but Thomas Colley Moore does. He's a dangerously unhinged man, with a devil of a temper and Florence is his sister. I've said it before and I shall say it again; he couldn't give his sister up to any man, much less his old school chum. Tonight's engagement party made him lose control and he lashed out at Charles. A crime of passion perhaps, but there it is.

**Chris** Thank you, Mr Haversham, you've been most helpful. Perhaps you could fetch Thomas Colley Moore. I'm going to need to follow more than one line of enquiry at a time to get to the bottom of this.

**Max** At once, Inspector, anything to help the progress of your investigation.

**Max** *exits catching his arm in the door.*

**Chris** Hang it all, Charles. Who could've killed you? Everybody under this damned roof seems guilty.

**Chris** *sits on the chaise longue.*

**Chris** That's queer. There's something underneath these cushions. A ledger?

**Chris** *removes the cushions from the chaise longue, there is no ledger. He begins to search for it, pulling off the lining of the chaise longue, looking inside the pillows. Vamps to cover. Eventually he finds it underneath the chaise longue.*

**Chris** A ledger! With Charles's initials inscribed on the cover. What's inside? Notes . . . bills . . . what's this? The Last Will and Testament of Charles Haversham . . . dated only today? . . . Let me see . . . (**Chris** *tries to take the ribbon off the document, but he can't, he reads off the closed document.*) 'I Charles Haversham, hereby amend my last will and testament to leave my money, Haversham Manor and all its contents and grounds to one . . .' Good Lord!

**Max and Robert** *enter. Chris hurriedly puts the ledger and paper away.*

**Max** Thomas Colley Moore for you, Inspector.

**Chris** Ah, thank you, Cecil. But before I question you, Mr Colley Moore, I do need to review some documents in Charles's study.

**Max** Of course, it's quickest to take the elevator.

**Chris** I'll return presently.

**Max** Take your time, Inspector.

**Robert** Indeed.

**Chris** gets into the elevator carriage and closes the doors. A dreadful clanking is heard. The upstairs doors open and **Chris** is only halfway up to the upper level. **Chris** indignantly climbs out onto the upper level.

**Max** Did you find Florence?

**Robert** She ran out into the grounds.

*The elevator carriage is heard falling back down to the ground floor violently. **Chris** looks shocked and then begins to look through the drawers in the bureau. The elevator carriage crashing back down to the floor causes the downstairs voice-pipe funnel to fall off the wall.*

**Robert** picks up the funnel and puts it back on the wall, knocking the barometer off.

**Max** Tell me, Thomas, what were your feelings about Charles and Florence's engagement?

**Max** picks up the barometer and puts it back on the wall causing the painting of the dog to fall down. **Max** goes to hold up the painting, leaving the barometer to **Robert**. They are left holding all three items up.

**Robert** I was overjoyed, of course. I love Florence and I loved Charles, I couldn't have approved more of the match.

**Max** But Colley Moore, it's well known that you're protective of your sister.

*The telephone rings.*

**Max** I'll get it.

**Max** tries hard to keep holding the picture against the wall and reach for the phone, it takes him a while. The phone keeps ringing; eventually he manages to pick up the receiver.

**Max** Good evening. (*Beat.*) It's for you.

**Robert** Who the devil is it?

**Max** Your accountants, Colley Moore.

**Robert** At eleven thirty in the evening?

**Max** Yes.

**Max** *tries painfully to pass the receiver to Robert. Robert eventually gets it, keeping the voice-pipe and barometer on the wall using his head.*

**Robert** *(speaking in extreme discomfort)* Good evening. Yes, Thomas Colley Moore speaking. It is inconvenient, yes! . . . My recent deposits? What of them? . . . Discrepancies? What are you talking about, man? . . . Gone? Gone where? . . . Nine thousand pounds stolen! Good God, man! Perkins, get in here.

**Dennis** *enters through the door as far as he can.*

**Dennis** Yes, sir.

**Robert** Perkins, fetch me my bankbook.

**Dennis** *passes Robert the bankbook.*

**Dennis** Your bankbook, sir.

**Dennis** *puts the bankbook into Robert's mouth. Then Dennis passes a pen through the door and puts this in Robert's mouth as well.*

**Robert** Thank you, Perkins.

**Robert** *rearranges himself to take the phone again.*

**Robert** How could you allow this to happen? This is an absolute disgrace! I shall report you to your superiors. Who am I speaking with? Mr Fitzroy. I'll write that name down. *(Robert writes the name in his bankbook with a lot of difficulty.)* Fi . . . tz . . . roy. Now look here, Fitzroy, I didn't authorise this transaction, you find out who did and call back. This telephone call has put me in a very difficult position.

**Robert** *throws the phone to Max who hangs it up.*

**Max** What is it, Colley Moore?

**Robert** Money, stolen from my accounts!

**Max** Good lord!

**Robert** Nine thousand pounds taken from my private savings.

**Max** Most irregular!

**Robert** What a ghastly business. First my oldest friend murdered in cold blood and now I find myself on edge of financial ruin! This evening could get no worse!

**Max** Thomas, I have a confession. I wasn't going to say anything, but well, the Inspector seems to have found out and blast it, I'm tired of keeping secrets.

**Robert** Spit it out, Cecil.

**Max** Well . . . Florence and I are having an affair!

**Robert** WHAT?!

**Robert** *launches himself at Max who dives downstage. The dog picture, funnel and barometer mysteriously all stay hung in their positions. Robert and Max double take.*

**Robert** You and my sister?!

**Robert** *throws Max over the chaise longue.*

**Max** Now, calm down, Colleymoore.

**Robert** I knew it! You always were a snake in the grass.

**Robert** *drags Max up by his hair, accidentally slamming him into the side of the clock.*

**Max** It's not what you think! We're in love!

**Robert** My sister does not love you. How dare you lay a finger on her; your own brother's fiancée! It's disgusting! No wonder your father hated you!

**Max** Don't speak about my father that way, Colleymoore!

**Robert** I'm afraid it's time for you to answer to me for your indiscretions. Draw your sword, Cecil!



**Robert** *draws a sword from the shield above the door and points it at Max. Max goes to take the other sword from the shield, but finds it stuck. They sword fight as best they can. Robert waves his sword dramatically.*

**Robert** En garde!

**Max** Good shot!

**Robert** Nice try, Cecil, but no match for my skill!

**Max** Let's try that again!

**Robert** En garde!

*They fight.*

**Robert** You know sometimes I forget you're Charley's brother, you're so pathetic!

**Max** I shan't let you get away that easily, Colleymoore!

*They fight again. Max's sword breaks.*

**Robert** Have at you, Haversham!

**Max** Good parry, Colleymoore!

**Robert** Good parry! I'll show you a good parry!

**Robert** *accidentally thrusts his sword through the underside of the upper level stabbing Chris in the bottom of his foot. Robert tries to pull his sword back but finds it stuck. Both try to continue the fight without their swords. Max tears a section off the front of his shirt to reveal a red slash across his chest.*

**Max** You've cut me, Colleymoore!

**Robert** I don't need this to kill a man like you! It seems there's no doubt about who killed Charles any more. He was killed by his own vile little brother in a fit of jealous rage.

**Max** I shan't stand for this, Colleymoore!

**Robert** You'll be sorry you ever laid a finger on my sister, Haversham. You'll be sorry!

**Robert** eventually knocks **Max** through the back wall. **Max** reappears through the downstairs door in pain. **Robert** and **Max** exit, slamming the door. The dog picture, voice-pipe funnels, barometer, curtain rail, trophy plaque and heraldic shield all fall off the wall at once. **Dennis** is revealed in the window with a glass of sherry on a tray. He hurriedly enters through the door and sets the tray down by the telephone. Suddenly three loud gunshots and a scream are heard offstage.

**Dennis** Gunshots in the library!

**Chris** (picks up the end of the voice-pipe and speaks into it) Dear God, what's going on down there?

**Dennis** (picks up the other end of the voice-pipe downstairs and speaks into it) I don't know, Inspector, I heard screams and gunshots from downstairs!

**Chris** (into the pipe) Good God, man! Get up here! Quickly, get in the elevator!

**Dennis** (into the pipe) Yes, Inspector!

**Dennis** climbs in the elevator and it rises quickly and goes too far, trapping him into the rig of the theatre.

**Dennis** What's happening tonight, Inspector!

**Chris** I don't know, Perkins, we're not safe, there's a mad man with a gun, loose in this house. Try to remain calm, Perkins.

**Chris** pats **Dennis's** foot. **Robert** enters through the downstairs door. He picks up the voice-pipe.

**Robert** Inspector! Inspector!

**Chris** (into the pipe) Is that you, Colleymoore?

**Robert** Are you alright?

**Chris** Is the coast clear, Colleymoore?

**Robert** I think so, Inspector.

**Dennis** We'll come down now.

**Chris** *looks at the elevator carriage and then climbs down the side of the set to the lower level.*

**Robert** There you are. I don't know how you manage to look so calm and collected in a situation such as this.

**Chris** It comes from years of experience.

**Robert** Indeed.

*The elevator falls down heavily, landing with a bump visibly startling Chris. The doors open and Dennis comes out looking relieved.*

**Chris** It is important we remain calm, and we mustn't let each other out of our sight. Where's Miss Colleymoore?

**Robert** She's coming now! Get in here, Florence! It's not safe down there!

**Jonathan** *pushes Annie in through the door. She's wearing Sandra's dress over her own clothes and she clutches a script.*

**Annie** *(reads each word slowly from the script, in a thick Lancashire accent)* Thomas, I'm frightened!

**Robert** Don't worry, Florence, you're safe in here with me.

**Dennis** What is going on?

**Chris** Isn't it obvious! Cecil has lost control!

**Annie** Cecil! Surely not!

**Chris** He killed Charles tonight; driven mad by his lust for you and now he knows we've found him out!

**Annie** I cannot bear it. Cecil would not do such a thing.

**Dennis** This is a fine mess, sir! The worst night I've seen in eighty-eight years of service!

**Annie** Save me brother, save me! *(Clings onto Chris.)*

**Chris** *pushes her onto Robert.*

**Robert** I shan't let anyone hurt a hair on your head, Florence.

**Annie** I'm panicking! I can't believe . . . Cecil?

**Chris** Cecil!

**Annie** Cecil . . . is doing this?

**Dennis** Try to stay calm, Miss Colley Moore!

**Annie** I shall faint!

*Annie falls back without warning. Robert just catches her.*

**Robert** You shan't faint, confound it! What a devil of a situation this is!

**Jonathan** *bursts in again, holding his gun.*

**Jonathan** Not so fast, Insp . . . !

*Jonathan realises he is still too early, and exits again. After leaving he slowly walks past the window, his head in his hands. He realises the audience can see him, mortified he darts out of view.*

**Robert** We're all going to survive tonight, you hear me?

**Chris** *peers out of the door.*

**Chris** Take cover!

**Robert** Great Scot!

**Dennis** Good heavens!

**Annie** Aye, me!

**Chris** Don't panic! Cecil's crossing the landing. We must lock him out!

**Robert** Where are the keys to the door, Perkins?

**Dennis** Here they are, sir!

*Dennis pulls out the notebook from his pocket. Chris upends the vase sending the keys flying out, Dennis catches them.*

**Dennis** Here they are, sir!

**Chris** Quickly, Perkins, hand them to me before Cecil . . .

*The door bursts open and Max staggers inside. He shuffles forward a few paces and then flops dead onto the chaise longue. Three bullet wounds in his back.*

**Chris** Good lord!

*Short musical spike plays.*

**Annie** Cecil's dead?

*The same short musical spike plays.*

**Dennis** A double murder!

*A short snatch of 'Girls on Film' by Duran Duran plays, then suddenly the correct musical spike cuts in.*

**Trevor** (on **Annie's** radio) Found the Duran Duran, carry on.

**Chris** (check's **Max's** pulse) Time of death; quarter to midnight.

**Chris** checks the clock. It still reads 5:30.

**Annie** (with genuine affection) Cecil! No! No! No! I loved him! I loved him! I know it's wrong. I know I was engaged to Charles; but Cecil was mine and.

*Silence. Chris turns the page in her script.*

**Annie** . . . I was his.

**Dennis** There, there, Miss Colley Moore.

**Annie** How will I go on? Sobs.

**Chris** You! Take this body outside!

**Dennis** Yes, sir!

**Robert** I'll lend you a hand, Perkins.

**Chris** I've seen a lot in the twenty years I've been an inspector, but two murders on one night is certainly unusual.

**Dennis** *opens the door and pulls out the two stretcher poles from earlier. Dennis and Robert lay them on the floor before rolling Max on top of the two poles. They lift the poles, optimistically. Max grasps them and holding on for dear life they carry him towards the door. Robert and Dennis can't get Max off through the door, so tip him onto his side and exit through the door and past the window.*

**Annie** Oh, Inspector! My fiancé and my lover killed on the same eve!

**Chris** Remember your breathing, Miss Colley Moore, now is not the time for another of your episodes!

**Annie** (*calm*) I am having an episode, Inspector! I cannot help it!

**Annie** *tries to scream and shake as she has seen Sandra do in rehearsals.*

**Chris** No, Miss Colley Moore!

**Robert and Dennis** *re-enter.*

**Robert** Florence! Control yourself, girl!

**Dennis** She's having another episode!

**Annie** (*calmly reads*) They're dead! They're gone and they're never coming back!

**Robert** I will not tolerate another tantrum, Florence!

**Annie** (*calm*) Get away from me, Tom. You don't understand my grief.

**Robert** That's enough, take one of your pills.

**Annie** No. Not more pills.

**Annie** *takes a pill with no hesitation from Robert.*

**Annie** Oh, they're mints.

**Robert** But who could've killed him?

**Dennis** That's a good question, Mr Colley Moore.

**Chris** . . . and one we need to answer quickly if we're going to get out of this house alive.

**Annie** Oh, Inspector, you've given me a chill!

**Chris** Perkins, pour us all another Scotch.

**Dennis** Of course, Inspector.

**Dennis** *pours more white spirit for everyone.*

**Chris** Now, tell me, is there anyone else that you know of in the grounds other than the four of us?

**Annie** Not a soul.

**Robert** The staff all go home at weekends, except for Perkins, of course. (*Drinks and spits out the white spirit.*) Good God, I needed that.

**Chris** Does anyone else have access to the grounds?

**Annie** No one, Inspector.

**Dennis** I'm the only one with the master key and as instructed I locked and bolted the doors, as soon as you arrived.

**Robert** Then who could have killed him?

*The script begins goes round in a loop.*

**Dennis** That's a good question, Mr Colley Moore.

**Chris** . . . and one we need to answer quickly if we're going to get out of this house alive.

**Annie** Inspector, you've given me a chill!

**Chris** Perkins, pour us all another Scotch.

**Dennis** Of course, Inspector.

**Dennis** *pours white spirit again.*

**Chris** Now, tell me, is there anyone else that you know of in the grounds other than the four of us?

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**Robert** The staff all go home at weekends, except for Perkins, of course. (*Drinks. Spits out again.*) Good God, I needed that.

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**Annie** No one, Inspector,

**Dennis** I'm the only one with the master key and as instructed I locked and bolted the doors, as soon as you arrived.

**Robert** Then who could have killed him?

**Dennis** *doesn't realise and the loop goes around again.*

**Dennis** That's a good question, Mr Colley Moore.

**Chris** . . . and one we need to answer quickly if we're going to get out of this house alive.

**Annie** Inspector, you've given me a chill!

**Chris** Perkins, pour us all another Scotch.

**Dennis** Of course, Inspector.

**Dennis** *pours white spirit again.*

**Chris** Now, tell me is there anyone else that you know of in the grounds other than the four of us?

**Annie** Not a soul.

**Robert** The staff all go home at weekends, except for Perkins, of course. (*Drinks. Spits out again.*) Good God, I needed that.

**Chris** Does anyone have access to the grounds?

**Annie** No one, Inspector,

**Dennis** I'm the only one with the master key and as instructed I locked and bolted all the doors, as soon as you arrived.



**Robert** Then who could have killed him?

*The script loops again.*

**Dennis** That's a good question, Mr Colley Moore.

**Chris** . . . and one we need to answer quickly if we're going to get out of this house alive.

**Annie** Inspector, you've given me a chill!

**Chris** Perkins, pour us all another Scotch.

**Dennis** Of course, Inspector.

**Dennis** *pours scotch again.*

**Chris** Now, tell me is there anyone else that you know of in the grounds other than the four of us?

**Annie** Not a soul.

**Robert** The staff all go home at weekends, except for Perkins, of course. (*Drinks again. Spits out again.*) Good God, I needed that.

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*The script loops again.*

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**Annie** Inspector, you've given me a chill!

**Chris** Perkins, pour us all another Scotch.

**Dennis** Of course, Inspector.

**Dennis** *pours white spirit again.*

**Chris** Now, tell me is there anyone else that you know of in the grounds other than the four of us?

**Annie** Not a soul.

**Robert** The staff all go home at weekends, except for Perkins, of course. (*Throws the white spirit over Dennis.*) Good God, I needed that.

**Chris** Does anyone have access to the grounds?

**Annie** No one, Inspector,

**Dennis** I'm the only one with the master key and as instructed I locked and bolted all the doors, as soon as you arrived.

**Robert** Then who could have killed him?

**Dennis** (*realises*) No one could have killed them!

**Robert** Except the people in this room.

**Chris** Good God, you're right, it's one of us!

*All gasp.*

**Annie** (*reads*) This is a disaster! Blackout. Interval.

**Annie** *realises her mistake.*

**Annie** Oh.

*Blackout. Tabs fly in. Music.*

*Interval activity:*

*A few minutes into the interval the safety curtain begins to come down, it stops a foot or two from the floor. Trevor enters and quietly pushes it down.*

**Robert** *appears in auditorium/foyer in a robe and joins the queue for ice creams. Chris appears and sends him backstage.*

## *Act Two*

*Dramatic house music plays.*

*The house lights fade and **Chris** once again emerges from the wings. A spotlight picks him out of the darkness.*

**Chris** Good evening again, ladies and gentlemen, I hope you have enjoyed the break, we will be resuming this evening's performance in just a couple of moments, I am assured. I must say I'm delighted to see that so many of you have returned for the second half of the production. You've certainly proved the cynical and somewhat candid Box Office Manager incorrect.

Obviously, I would be lying if I said the first act went entirely as rehearsed, there were one or two minor snags, which you may or may not have picked up on. But they are snags that would occur on any opening night and this certainly hasn't been the worst first act Cornley Polytechnic has seen, by some stretch.

Last year our production of *The Wizard of Oz* got off to a shaky start when we didn't realise that our set designer suffered from colour blindness. The audience found it a little disappointing when Dorothy put on her brown slippers and walked down the brown-brick road to get to the Brown City.

Worse still was the opening of our play, *Waiting for Godot*; just ten minutes into the production a Spanish gentleman arrived at the village hall unaware of our performance for his weekly yoga class. His blundering onto the stage and the fact that he was called Gabrio resulted in a rather confusing reworking of Beckett's classic.

Two years back our presentation of *101 Dalmatians* certainly didn't begin well either. After a major confusion with the theatrical livestock company Cruella De Ville ended up trying to make a fur coat out of 101 Hoolock gibbons. The

dreadful screeching mating call of the Hoolock gibbon still haunt some of us to this day.

Also, before we begin again, one word of . . .

**Chris** *is interrupted by Trevor's voice offstage over his radio.*

**Trevor** *(over radio)* . . . It's going quite badly to be honest.

**Chris** Before we resume the . . .

**Trevor** *(over radio)* Yeah, she's unconscious, and we still can't find the dog . . .

**Chris** Before we resume the production one word of health and safety administration; can I please ask anyone who consumed one of the strawberry ice creams available during the interval to please seek medical help at the end of this evening's performance.

And now, without further ado, it gives me great pleasure to present the concluding act of Murder at Haversham Manor.

**Chris** *exits. Introduction music plays and the tabs fly out revealing Trevor, Annie, Robert, Dennis and Jonathan in half-light, all re-hanging the picture, voice-pipe funnels, barometer, curtains, trophy plaques etc. on the walls. They see the audience. Chris enters from the wings outraged. The house tabs stops and fly back in. Beat. The house tabs fly back out revealing Robert, Dennis, Chris and Annie in their positions from the end of Act I. Trevor and Jonathan have gone. All wall hangings are back in position. Beat. All wall hangings crash down to the floor. Full lights come up.*

**Dennis** No one could have killed them!

**Robert** Except for the people in this room.

**Chris** Good God, you're right, it's one of us!

*All gasp.*

**Annie** *(reads from her script)* This is a disaster.

**Robert** And it's not over yet! Two murders in one night at Haversham Manor, what a grizzly evening.

**Annie** Frightful, brother, frightful.

**Dennis** And look, Mr Colley Moore! The snowstorm outside is building!

**Dennis** *opens the window and a huge flood of snow is thrown in, getting Dennis heavily in the face.*

**Robert** If we're not careful we'll be snowed into this slaughterhouse! We must discover the guilty man!

**Chris** Indeed. The gunshots were heard coming from the library, I shall investigate the room. All of you remain here.

**Chris** *exits through the downstairs door.*

**Robert** This whole business is a disgrace. Now, let us remind ourselves of what we know.

**Dennis** We know Charles Haversham was found dead, here, in his own private rooms on the night his engagement party.

**Robert** We know that his fiancée, was involved in an affair with his brother, Cecil. How could my own sister behave in such a way.

**Annie** Not now, Thomas! We know that he too was murdered on the same evening, in cold blood.

**Dennis** The only thing we don't know is who the murderer is.

**Annie** The tension in this house is awf . . .

**Annie** *trips up over the fallen curtains and drops her script on the floor, the pages of her script go everywhere. Annie tries to pick up the papers but they are all out of order. She reads from the wrong page of the script.*

**Annie** Cecil! Quick! Your brother's dead!

**Dennis** And already it's midnight!

*A very loud clock chime is played, twelve times.*

**Dennis** That was most ominous.

**Robert** Ominous indeed. Florence. How are you feeling now?

*Annie reads off the wrong page of the script.*

**Annie** Of course not, but that's what the Inspector will think.

**Robert** Really, do you need to lie down?

**Annie** Oh, enough words! Take me!

**Robert** Oh, Florence, you really mustn't feel that way. As soon as the Inspector returns from checking the library, we'll have this whole matter resolved. Florence, I do care really, all I want is what's best for you.

*Annie searches through the pages to try and find the right one.*

**Annie** (*reads from the wrong page*) Kiss me a thousand times! I'm yours!

**Robert** Of course, Florence. That's what brothers are for.

*Chris enters upstairs holding a shotgun. He calls into the voice-pipe.*

**Chris** Colleymoore! Quicky! Come up to Charles's study. I need to speak to you.

**Robert** At once, Inspector.

*Robert gets into the elevator carriage. The elevator rises but the floor breaks leaving Robert on the lower level.*

**Chris** There you are, Colleymoore!

**Robert** Yes, Inspector.

*Robert tries to climb up to the upper level.*

**Chris** I must speak to you, Thomas.

**Robert** Of course, Carter.

**Chris** Are you sitting comfortably?

**Robert** Most comfortably, Inspector.

**Dennis** and **Annie** try to push **Robert** up.

**Chris** Before we speak; I must check no one else is in earshot.

**Robert** No one else is here, Inspector.

**Chris** Very well. Colleymoore, I have found the weapon that was used to kill Cecil Haversham.

**Robert** Good lord, where was it?

**Chris** In the library, it was lying on the table, muzzle warm and the barrel still smoking.

**Robert** Someone killed Cecil with this?

**Robert** *manages to get up onto the upper level and takes the gun from Chris.*

**Chris** Yes, Colleymoore, and not long ago.

**Robert** But . . . who?

**Chris**; I was hoping you would be able to tell me that, Colleymoore? After all we are friends, aren't we?

**Robert** I have no idea who killed Cecil, I was down in the kitchens when I heard the gunshots, fetching my sister some refreshment . . .

**Robert** *forgets his line.*

**Robert** Line!

**Trevor** (*off*) I don't know what page we're on, mate!

**Robert** I don't know what page we're on, mate.

**Robert** *realises this isn't the line and looks to Trevor furiously.*

**Chris** (*prompts Robert*) Besides, why would I/want to . . .

**Robert** Besides, why would I want to kill my oldest friend's younger brother?

**Chris** Perhaps because you found out about his affair with Florence, we all know you're a jealous man, Colleymoore. Ruthlessly protective of your sister.

**Robert** Protective! I approve of whatever makes my sister happy.

**Chris** Don't play the fool with me, Thomas. You shot Cecil Haversham in cold blood and you know that wasn't the plan.

*Focus shifts downstairs.*

**Dennis** What the devil's going on upstairs I wonder, Miss Colleymoore.

**Annie** (*wrong page*) Perhaps one kiss.

**Dennis** You're probably right, Miss Colleymoore; nothing to worry about.

*There is a heavy knock at the door.*

**Dennis** Who on earth could that be?

**Annie** (*wrong page*) Our engagement party.

**Dennis** I don't know either, Miss Colleymoore! Quickly, we must hide you out of harm's way.

**Annie** (*wrong page*) I'm twenty-one.

**Dennis** I have no choice but to let you into one of this manor's secrets.

**Annie** (*wrong page*) You're an animal, Thomas!

**Dennis** Charles had a hidden passageway built behind this bookcase which he informed me was only to be used in emergencies.

**Annie** (*wrong page*) It's revolting.

**Dennis** Well, you better had believe it, Miss Colleymoore. Stand aside, I'll open the secret entrance.



**Dennis** *pulls a book down from the bookshelf. Nothing happens. He pulls another book down. He frantically pulls books down. Annie pulls the book, which triggers the bookcase to swivel. The bookcase turns and swallows Dennis up.*

**Dennis** (off) Step inside, Miss Colley Moore.

**Annie** *steps in front of the bookcase and it swivels again spitting Dennis back out. The bookcase keeps turning and spits Annie back out again. More knocking comes from the downstairs door.*

**Dennis** You're safe in there, Miss Colley Moore.

**Dennis** *pulls the book again and the bookcase spins around spitting Annie back out for a second time.*

**Annie** (wrong page) I'm panicking!

**Dennis** *pulls the book again and it spins swallowing Annie and spitting Trevor back out onto the stage. Trevor gets up looking confused, he goes to exit through the door, but hears more knocking and panics, hiding in the long case clock.*

**Dennis** Stay quiet, Miss Colley Moore! I'll see who's at the door!

*As Dennis moves towards the downstairs door it opens to reveal Max dressed as a new character (Arthur the gardener) in striped overalls and with a beard, pipe and a pair of secateurs, holding a lead, with no dog. Max gives the same performance he did as Cecil.*

**Max** Perkins!

**Dennis** (in shock) Arthur?! What are you doing here?

**Max** Me and Winston got caught in the storm and couldn't make it home.

*More snow is thrown in through the window and door. Max closes the door.*

**Dennis** Good heavens, Arthur, come inside, you won't believe what a nightmare this evening has been.

**Max** How do you mean? Sit, Winston.

*They look at the lead. Nothing happens.*

**Max** Good boy.

**Dennis** Mr Haversham was murdered tonight.

**Max** Charles Haversham?

**Robert** *trips and falls heavily causing the upper level with Robert and Chris on it to slant slightly. The drinks trolley and chair roll across the floor. Robert stops them before they roll off the edge.*

**Dennis** And not only that, his brother Cecil has also been killed.

**Max** Heavens! That explains the strange goings on I have seen in the grounds this evening.

**Dennis** Strange goings on?

**Max** A mysterious figure in the bushes. I went over to investigate but by the time my old legs had got me there they'd disappeared. The figure stood by the shrubbery that stands outside this very room and I noticed that the latch on the window was forced open and Winston found this on the ground beneath it.

**Max** *produces a handkerchief from his pocket.*

**Max** A lace handkerchief. Quiet, Winston! Stained with a deep red mark with a distinctive scent.

**Dennis** Cyanide.

**Max** Precisely, cyanide.

**Dennis** Cyanide!

**Max** . . . and you can tell from the shape of the mark it's been used to hold a bottle. But not only that, the handkerchief is also monogrammed with the initials 'F.C.'

**Dennis** . . . Florence Colley Moore.

**Max** Indeed.

*Focus shifts upstairs. Chris holds out Charles's will and takes out his magnifying glass.*

**Chris** I must show you this, Thomas. No doubt you'll find it interesting.

**Robert** What is it?

**Robert** *reaches out to take it, removing his hand from the drinks trolley causing it to accidentally roll off the edge of the upper level.*

**Robert** *catches it and holds it dangling over the edge.*

**Chris** A new draft of Charles' Last Will and Testament, dated today. It appears he has changed the beneficiary.

**Robert** Who on earth has he changed the bene . . .

**Robert** *lets go of the chair to open the will and the chair rolls off the edge of the upper level. Robert manages to catch that as well.*

**Chris** *deposits his magnifying glass on the bureau.*

**Robert** . . . changed the beneficiary to? Good lord . . .

**Chris** That's right!

**Robert** He's leaving it all to, Perkins!

*Focus shifts downstairs.*

**Dennis** Arthur, you're suggesting that Florence Colley Moore broke into Charles's private rooms this afternoon?

**Max** She must have done.

**Dennis** Good God!

**Max** Miss Colley Moore has killed her own fiancé!

**Dennis** She's concealed behind the bookcase. I'll bring her in.

**Dennis** *pulls the lever on the bookcase and it spins around very fast, spitting Annie back out with a red folder with new script in it.*

**Dennis** Miss Colley Moore! You killed your fiancé! We have the evidence to prove it!

**Annie** (*grinning, knowing she's got it right*) How dare you, Perkins!

*Focus shifts upstairs.*

**Chris** The time has come to confront Perkins and tell him we know what he has done! Get in the elevator, Colley Moore.

**Robert** *cannot move from where he is, holding the chair and drinks trolley up.*

**Robert** Yes, Inspector!

**Chris** *climbs back down to the lower level.*

**Chris** Perkins!

**Annie** (*reading from script*) Thank heavens, Inspector! These two have been accusing me of the most dreadful things!

**Max** Hold your tongue, we all know what you've done! Stop growling, Winston!

**Dennis** Winston, the Inspector's here to help us.

**Chris** Arthur, I presume.

**Dennis** Arthur the gardener is the gardener, Inspector.

**Chris** (*whispers*) Just Arthur!

**Dennis** Just Arthur the gardener is the gardener, Inspector.

**Chris** and **Max** *shake hands. Chris pretends he's been snapped at by the dog.*

**Max** Sorry about Winston, Inspector, I don't know what's got into him. I'll put him outside.

**Max** *throws the lead out the door.*

**Max** I'm the longest serving member of staff at Haversham Manor.

**Dennis** He's been working for Mr Haversham for ninety years.

**Chris** Nine.

**Dennis** Ninety-nine years.

**Chris** Ninety-nine years, what a dedicated man. But Arthur, I was informed you left Haversham Manor at six o'clock today?

**Robert** Very suspicious if you ask me.

**Chris** It appears you were hiding in the grounds on the night two men were murdered here.

**Robert** (*struggling with the furniture*) Oh! This is becoming too much for me!

**Dennis** Arthur became trapped in the snowstorm and couldn't make it to the gates.

**Chris** How implausible. I don't suppose you realise what you have walked into this evening then, Arthur?

**Max** To the contrary, Inspector. It appears I have discovered a clue that will close the case.

**Max** *holds out the monogrammed handkerchief.*

**Chris** A handkerchief

**Dennis** Monogrammed!

**Chris** Monogrammed!

**Max** . . . and stained with cyanide as if used to conceal a bottle. Dropped on the ground beneath the forced window that was used to gain access to this room so someone could poison Charles.

**Chris** Good God! How dreadful!

**Robert** (*struggling with the furniture*) I'm at the limit of what I can take now, you know!

**Chris** Colley Moore, fetch my magnifying glass from the study. I must inspect this handkerchief in more detail.

**Robert** Without delay, Inspector!

**Robert** *tries to get up and reach out for the magnifying glass but is held back by the trolley and chair dangling over the edge of the upper level. The upper level suddenly drops again putting it on even more of an incline. This sends the bureau sliding down towards Robert who stops it with his feet.*

**Chris** None of you worry any longer, we're really onto this matter now, I have no doubt we'll have the culprit nailed down presently.

*The drawer slides open and Robert looks inside, he produces the vase and passes it to Chris.*

**Robert** Your magnifying glass, Inspector!

**Chris** Thank you, Colley Moore.

**Dennis** But Inspector . . . there's something you don't know about that handkerchief . . .

*The telephone rings loudly.*

**Max** I'll answer it. (*Picks up receiver.*) Good evening? (*Beat.*) It's for you, Mr. Colley Moore.

**Robert** Another telephone call?!

**Max** Yes, sir.

**Robert** Who is it, Arthur?

**Max** Mr Fitzroy, sir. He said you asked him to call you back.

**Robert** YES! I DID, DIDN'T I? Hand me the receiver, Arthur.

**Max** *passes Robert the receiver who takes it with difficulty.*

**Robert** Fi . . . tz . . . roy. Thank you for calling again . . . yes this is a much more convenient time, thank you . . . Another transaction traced . . . a one-way ticket to Dover? No, I have no idea! A man at the bank . . . well I tell you it wasn't me! You've given nine thousand pounds of my money to someone else. You are causing me more pain than you could possibly imagine! I shall hang up immediately.

**Robert** *throws the phone back to Max. Max catches it and returns it.*

**Robert** That phone call was even more disastrous than the previous one.

**Dennis** What's happened, Mr Colley Moore?

**Robert** What a dreadful evening! I must check my bank records once more, if you'll excuse me.

**Robert** *begins to try to exit through the upstairs door. Crawling with all the furniture towards it. Robert runs out the door and is immediately seen falling past the window.*

**Dennis** Inspector! There is something about the handkerchief you have not detected!

**Chris** What is it, Perkins?

**Dennis** It bears initials . . . the initials 'F.C.'

**Max** Florence Colley Moore is the murderer, Inspector!

**Annie** Me! The murderer! How can you!

**Chris** Your handkerchief, stained with cyanide found at the scene of the crime . . . damning evidence, Miss Colley Moore.

**Annie** Inspector! Don't begin this nonsense again! I declare, I am not guilty

**Chris** You are guilty, Miss Colley Moore. It is plain for us all to see. You were engaged to be married to Charles, a man who, according to your letter, you despised. Not only this but you were having an affair with his brother –

**Annie** Cecil!

**Chris** . . . Cecil. It seems plausible to me that you both murdered him so you could be together.

**Annie** Oh! Stop it, Inspector! Cecil's dead too now and I certainly didn't kill Ch . . .

**Robert** *enters sharply through the downstairs door, knocking Annie out.*

**Robert** I checked my bank recor . . . oh!

**Chris** You're lying, Florence, you killed him!

**Robert** Florence, behave with some decorum! Remember yourself!

**Chris** You killed your fiancé, Florence! What do you have to say for yourself?

**Sandra** (*off*) I am no murderer!

**Sandra** *bursts in through the swivel bookcase in her underwear.*

**Chris** We all know that's not true . . .

**Sandra** It is true, Inspector!

**Max** You've been exposed!

**Robert** Truly exposed!

**Chris** Very well, Miss Colley Moore, your name can easily be cleared; we shall examine Charles's body for evidence of cyanide poisoning. Colley Moore, Perkins, show me to the service quarters of the house to check the deceased once more.

**Dennis** Yes, Inspector.

**Chris** Arthur, you stay here with Miss Colley Moore and ensure she does not leave this room.

**Chris, Robert and Dennis** *exit through the downstairs door.*

**Sandra and Max** *are alone again. Max stares at the floor, he cannot look at Sandra.*



**Sandra** Arthur, you have known me years, surely you believe I would never do something like this!

**Max** On the contrary, Miss Colley Moore, it was I who discovered you to be the guilty party.

**Sandra** Oh, Arthur! How can you! Please, you must protect me from these fiends! I'll do anything to win your trust!

**Sandra** *throws herself into Max's arms.*

**Max** Oh, no! Miss Colley Moore! Do not use your feminine wiles to confuse me.

**Sandra** I have seen the way you look at me across the gardens.

**Max** *stares away from her.*

**Sandra** Even now, the way you're looking at me. The way you're looking . . . the way you're looking . . . the way you're looking . . . at . . . me . . .

**Sandra** *turns Max's head to look at her.*

**Sandra** The way you're looking at me! I know how you feel.

**Max** Please, Miss Colley Moore! I am a simple gardener, I . . .

**Sandra** . . . and you have said before how radiant I look when walking across the grounds. Please Arthur, protect me, I'll be yours if you do . . .

**Sandra** *grasps Max tighter.*

**Max** Miss Colley Moore! I do not feel as you suggest! You are a murderer and a seductress and I shall not be seduced.

**Max** *pushes Sandra away a little too hard and she knocks into the clock. Trevor is startled within the clock and opens the door knocking Sandra out again, she flops onto the chaise longue. Max and Trevor look at one another. Trevor reads Florence's next line from the script.*

**Trevor** (*reads*) Come now, Arthur, don't deny how you feel!

**Max** and **Trevor** *try to continue and load Sandra's unconscious form into the clock.*

**Max** Stop, Miss Colleymoore! You are using your power over men as you always have.

**Trevor** (*reads*) You can't pretend your feelings aren't real!

**Max** Very well, Miss Colleymoore, it is true perhaps that I have admired you.

**Trevor** (*reads*) Then kiss me, Arthur! You know you want to!

*Beat. Trevor then approaches Max. Max looks away.*

**Trevor** Kiss me, Arthur! You know you want to!

**Max** *looks scared.*

**Trevor** Kiss m . . .

**Max** *suddenly kisses Trevor. Robert, Chris and Dennis enter.*

**Robert** What on earth is going o . . .

*Silence.*

**Robert** What on earth is going on?

**Dennis** Miss Colleymoore in Arthur's arms?

**Chris** A second affair?

**Robert** Florence, you've changed.

**Trevor** (*reads*) Your wild accusations have driven me to this! My nerves are a wreck! I feel dizzy!

**Chris** I suggest you settle down, Miss Colleymoore!

**Max** I can explain!

**Robert** I don't think you can!

**Dennis** Where's her medication, Mr Colleymoore?

**Robert** Blast, I must have left it in the study.

**Robert** *exits through the downstairs door and passes the window.*

**Chris** Miss Colley Moore! You are a vile criminal!

**Dennis** And to think we took you in!

**Max** You manipulated me! I have let my master down tonight!

**Chris** All the while you were plotting your fiancé's demise!

**Robert** *reappears through the upstairs door, as he steps on the upper level, it fully collapses crushing Trevor. Silence.*

**Robert** *(aside)* Chris, I think they might have noticed that.

**Robert** *steps back into the doorway and runs back down the backstage stairs.*

**Chris** An adulteress and cold-blooded killer!

**Sandra** *(within the clock)* I'm not, Inspector!

*All turn to face the clock. Sandra tries to get out. Chris helps but she is stuck inside.*

**Chris** Yes, you are, Miss Colley Moore!

**Sandra** *(within the clock)* If only you knew, Inspector! I could never hurt a living soul! I shall faint!

*Beat. The clock topples over onto one side.*

**Dennis** She's fainted, Inspector.

**Max** It has become too much for her.

**Chris** Lie her down on the chaise longue.

**Max and Dennis** *lift the clock onto the chaise longue. Beat, the legs snap on the chaise longue.*

**Chris** That's better.

**Robert** *enters with the pillbox and a glass of water and sees the devastation.*

**Robert** I have Florence's medica . . . what's happened?

**Chris** Florence has fainted.

**Robert** Good lord. I'll wake her up. (*Throws water onto the clock.*) She's out cold.

**Max** Give her her medication.

**Robert** Take several.

**Robert** *starts to poke tablets from a pillbox into long case clock through the winding hole.*

**Max** But wait! This woman's figure was not the figure I saw through the shadows earlier on this evening. Her figure is slighter, her face softer. The figure I saw was that of a man.

**Chris** Of course it was, you were taken in by a handkerchief planted outside to frame Florence, she and Cecil both have plausible motives for murder . . . but not the true motive!

**Max** What are you saying, Inspector?

**Chris** The true motive belongs to Perkins!

**Dennis** Me, Inspector?

**Chris** You, Perkins! A little earlier I stumbled across Charles's newly written Last Will and Testament, dated only today, declaring that Charles wanted to make Perkins the sole beneficiary of his inheritance.

**Annie** *has regained consciousness. She slowly gets to her feet with her script.*

**Max** Surely not, Perkins!

**Dennis** This is all a mistake!

**Chris** Save your pleading for the police station. Cuff him, Thomas! (*Throws handcuffs to Robert who cuffs Dennis to the chaise longue.*) I'll drive you there myself as soon as the snowstorm has passed.

**Annie** *climbs up on top of the clock to resume playing Florence.*

**Max** That won't be for hours, the snow is at its peak!

*Snow is thrown through the window into Chris's face.*

**Dennis** It's not true, I tell you!

**Annie** *pretends to wake up.*

**Annie** What happened! I must have fainted! Curse my delicate . . .

**Sandra** *opens the door of the grandfather clock hitting Annie.*

**Sandra** What happened! I must have fainted! Curse my delicate constitution.

**Robert** You did faint, Florence! We have learned that Perkins committed the murder!

**Sandra** Perkins, but he's such a kindly old man.

**Dennis** There must be some misunderstanding! I didn't kill Charles. But I know who did!

**All** Who?!

**Dennis** INSPECTOR CARTER!

*All gasp.*

**Max** What on earth?

**Chris** Poppycock!

**Dennis** You did it, because Charles knew about the police money you were (*Checks hand.*) embezzling.

**Chris** Nonsense!

**Dennis** You say you'd met before; that you'd had several (*Checks hand.*) rendezvous with Charles at the local police station. You said he was a consultant on a fraud case you were working on.

**Chris** What of it?

**Dennis** Charles came home that evening very intrigued by the whole case. He decided to look into the matter personally. He found the reason why no arrests had been made were because the man committing the crime was yourself. You were the *façade* (*Checks hand.*) The perpetrator! You were the perpetrator!

**Chris** You can't prove it!

**Max** But Charles could and that's why you killed him!

**Chris** Never!

**Dennis** I know your secret, Inspector! What will you do? Kill me too?

**Chris** (*draws a gun and points it at Dennis*) I will! Confound it!

**Sandra** What a devil of a situation this is!

**Jonathan** *enters through the downstairs door again holding his gun.*

**Jonathan** Not so fast, Inspector!

*All hugely shocked at this.*

**Robert** Charles?

**Chris** Haversham?

**Dennis and Max** Sir!

**Sandra** Charley! I thought you were dead!

**Chris** You're alive? It's not possible.

**Jonathan** Oh, I'm afraid it is. You couldn't kill me that easily!

**Chris** How did you survive?

**Jonathan** I simply didn't drink the poisoned sherry you left out for me this evening!

**Sandra** Oh, Charley, this is more than I . . .

**Annie** slings **Sandra** offstage through the swivel bookcase and stands next to it.

**Annie** Oh, Charley, this more than I can bear!

**Jonathan** Ever since we last spoke at the police station it was clear you thought I was onto you. It was at this point I became afraid you'd try to kill me. For months now I've had my guard up and tonight you fell into my trap.

*The bookcase suddenly swivels swallowing up **Annie** and revealing **Sandra**.*

**Dennis** You've been hiding in the grounds ever since this afternoon when you planted the poison.

**Max** It was you that I saw! You were the mysterious figure!

**Sandra** I thought it was strange . . .

*The bookcase swivels again and **Annie** is now on stage holding a mop. She quickly slides the mop across the bookcase blocking **Sandra** from coming back in.*

**Annie** I thought it was strange you got here so quickly in such terrible weather.

**Sandra** *keeps trying to swivel the bookcase from offstage but can't because of the mop.* **Annie** wanders over to the window, picking up a tray.

**Max** But what about the handkerchief bearing Florence's initials?

**Jonathan** Perhaps you should ask Inspector Carter, or should I say Inspector Frederick Carter!

**All** 'F.C.!'

**Max** The same initials!

**Dennis** Precisely, and after committing the crime you found Charles's will in his ledger and tried to pin the whole thing on me.

**Sandra** *appears through the window.*

**Sandra** You damned craf . . .

**Annie** *hits Sandra with the tray; she falls out of sight behind the window.*

**Annie** You damned crafty devil!

**Jonathan** Crafty, indeed. Perkins here is as innocent as I am. Remove those handcuffs this instant!

**Robert** *goes to release Dennis but he doesn't have the key. Robert searches his pockets for the key. Dennis remains handcuffed to the chaise longue. Sandra is seen getting up behind the window and running to the downstage door. Annie is there first and holds the door shut.*

**Jonathan** Drop the gun, Inspector!

**Sandra** *(off)* Aye /me!

**Annie** Aye me!

**Chris** Never! I came here to kill you Charles and I won't leave until the job's done.

**Jonathan** It's over, Inspector. I could prove your guilt in a second. I have the evidence in the safe in my study. Fetch the papers, Perkins.

**Dennis** Yes, sir.

**Dennis** *goes to leave but he's still handcuffed to the chaise longue. Robert and Max lift the clock off of the chaise longue and Dennis slowly starts to drag the chaise longue over towards the fallen study floor to fetch the papers. Robert and Max place the clock down centre stage.*

**Jonathan** Lower your weapon, Inspector. It's over.

**Chris** What are you going to do, Charles? Shoot me in front of a room full of witnesses?

**Jonathan** Don't think I wouldn't do it, Carter! You tried to kill me; I'd merely be returning the favour!



**Annie** Please, Inspector! You're frighten . . .

*Suddenly Sandra bursts out of the clock. Annie opens the door to reveal no one there. Annie is furious, the others amazed.*

**Sandra** Please, Inspector! You're frightening me!

**Chris** You ought to be frightened!

**Jonathan** Arthur, follow Perkins upstairs and send a wire to the local police.

**Max** Yes, sir.

*Max exits through the downstairs door and Jonathan locks it after him, unseen by the others.*

**Sandra and Annie** You monster! You tried to kill Charles and you killed Ce . . .

*Annie charges at Sandra and Sandra flips Annie out of the window.*

**Sandra** . . . and you killed Cecil. How could you!

**Chris** I'll admit, I tried to kill Charles, but I never went anywhere near Cecil. In fact when I discovered that you and he were having an affair I was overjoyed. I had the perfect man to pin it on. Until my accomplice blundered in!

**Jonathan** It's true. And your accomplice, I regret to say, has been my friend ever since school. Isn't that right, Thomas Colley Moore?

**Robert** It's true. I'm the Inspector's accomplice; I helped him move the money!

**Jonathan** Indeed, Colley Moore! And I believe it is a decision you shall regret!

**Jonathan** *aims his gun at Robert.*

**Robert** No, Charley! Please!

**Robert** *rushes to the door and tries to get out.*

**Robert** Charley! You've locked the door!

*The door comes off in Robert's hand.*

**Robert** We're trapped! You're mad, Charley!

**Chris** *grabs Jonathan and throws him to the floor.*

**Chris** Quickly, Colley Moore! We'll get the elevator up to the study! We can escape down the east staircase.

**Robert and Chris** *start to climb the wall to get out of the upstairs door. Max bursts in through the upper level door, hitting Dennis.*

**Max** *almost falls as there is no floor and clings to the door.*

**Max** Now where's the telegraph . . . ohh!

**Jonathan** *(to Robert and Chris)* Get back down here! Arthur! Block the door.

**Max** Yes, sir!

**Dennis** *slides back down the upper level floor, still handcuffed to the chaise longue and now carrying the papers, past Robert and Chris. Dennis hands the papers to Jonathan.*

**Dennis** The papers, Mr Haversham!

**Jonathan** *takes the papers.*

**Jonathan** Thank you, Perkins, now fetch my reading glasses, they're on the study bookshelf.

**Dennis** Yes, sir!

**Dennis** *begins to scale the upper level floor again.*

**Robert** Get out of my way, Arthur!

**Max** I'm afraid I can't do that, Mr Colley Moore.

**Robert** Don't manhandle me, Arthur!

**Max** Stand down, Colley Moore! You have been discovered.

**Chris** Push him aside, Colley Moore! Do you want to spend the rest of your life in jail!

**Jonathan** Lock them in, Arthur! Don't let them escape!

**Max** At once, sir!

**Robert** Arthur, I will strike you down!

**Robert** *tries to strike Max but over reaches, trips and slides down to the bottom of the study floor grabbing at Chris and Max to save him.*

**Robert** Save me!

**Robert** *drags Chris and Max to the bottom with him.*

**Chris** It's useless, Colley Moore, there's no way out.

**Sandra** Brother! I'm surprised at . . .

**Annie** *appears in the window with the ledger and hits Sandra over the head with it.*

**Annie** Brother, I'm surprised at you! I don't know what you've become.

**Annie** *climbs in through the window.*

**Robert** *(getting up)* I feel so ashamed. Carter and I found that between us we could steal money from the police's sundry accounts easily. Carter had access and I had the facility to move the money fast and keep it secure, or so I thought until tonight.

**Robert** *forgets his line.*

**Robert** Line!

**Trevor** *emerges from below the collapsed upper level. Sandra crawls over to the telephone.*

**Trevor** This set's a death trap!

**Trevor** *shuffles off into the wings.*

**Robert** This set's a death trap!

**Chris** *(prompts Robert)* As for Cecil . . .

**Robert** As for Cecil, that was more a crime of passion, simple as that.

**Jonathan** Now, I hold in my hand, a written list of every fraudulent transaction Thomas Colleymoore and Inspector Frederick Carter made!

**Annie** This can't be true, I can't belie . . .

**Sandra** *pulls the telephone cord across Annie's path and trips her over.*

**Sandra** This can't be true. I can't believe it! I won't believe it!

**Jonathan** Your sordid affair sickened me, Florence. You broke my heart.

**Annie and Sandra** *try to get closer to Jonathan, knocking him to the floor.*

**Sandra and Annie** I made a mistake! Please, take me back! I'll be yours all over again!

**Jonathan** Take back a woman who has betrayed me? Never!

**Sandra and Annie** Charley! You're all I have! Love me! Please! Don't cast me aside! I shall be an outcast in the town! /My friends shan't speak to me. Never again shall I feel your embrace! Let me be your wife!

**Dennis** *slides back down the floor with the reading glasses.*

**Dennis** *(over the shouting)* Your reading glasses, sir!

**Jonathan** *(over the shouting)* Thank you, Perkins!

*Doorbell sounds. Noise subsides.*

**Jonathan** Unlock the door, Perkins.

**Dennis** Yes, sir!

**Dennis** *mimes unlocking the downstairs door and exits through it still with the chaise longue in tow.*

**Jonathan** That will be the police to arrest you both. Let them in, Perkins.

**Annie** Charley! I cannot bare it another . . .

*Annie grabs Sandra's ankles and drags her out through the door.*

**Sandra** Charley! I cannot bare it another second! Look at me, like you used to look at me!

**Jonathan** Silence, Florence! You are nothing to me, now!

**Sandra** (*managing to stand up*) This is the worst night of my life!

*Annie punches Sandra in the face; she falls out of sight behind the window.*

**Annie** No! No! No! This is the worst night of my life!

**Max** I think this is the worst night of all of our lives.

*Annie goes through the door and appears in the window with the tray.*

**Jonathan** But Thomas, Carter had you fooled, didn't he?

**Robert** What do you mean?

**Jonathan** . . . He never intended to share the money with you! Let me summarise . . .

**Annie** (*through the window*) I love you, Charley!

*Annie hits Sandra with the tray one final time.*

**Jonathan** Inspector Carter knew I discovered you and he were both embezzling police money, so you hatched a plan to kill me, planting cyanide in my sherry.

*Annie appears with a roll of industrial tape.*

**Annie** I've still got the ring, Charley! We can make it work!

*Annie begins to tape Sandra's hand together.*

**Jonathan** Then mistakenly believing I was dead, Inspector Carter tried to pin my murder on Cecil and Florence because of their affair until your accomplice, Thomas, blundered in and shot my brother Cecil. Carter then tried to pin it on Perkins instead after finding my will in the ledger.

*Annie looks up from taping Sandra.*

**Annie** TAKE ME, CHARLEY! IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU!

**Jonathan** Except what you didn't know, Thomas, was that the Inspector made a nine thousand pound withdrawal from your private accounts this morning and after framing someone for my murder planned to flee with a one-way ticket to Dover, taking every penny with him! I think it's time to open your attaché case, Inspector.

*Jonathan throws the case to Robert who opens the attaché case and produces a small brown bottle.*

**Jonathan** The bottle of cyanide!

*Robert produces several bundles of banknotes.*

**Jonathan** Thomas Colley Moore's nine thousand pounds!

**Robert** And of course, your one way ticket to Dover!

*Robert produces the vase from the attaché case.*

**Jonathan** He allowed you to take all the risk by storing the stolen money in your private accounts. Isn't that right, Inspector?

**Chris** Alright, it's true. I forged your signature at the bank and took out every penny. I hadn't bargained on your accountant catching on this quickly and telephoning you so soon.

*Annie has subdued Sandra and made it back on stage. Robert runs at Chris, seizes his gun and points it at him.*

**Robert** You rogue! I trusted you! You made a mistake there, Carter, and I'm afraid it's your last!

**Chris** No!

**Robert** *fires the gun. It doesn't fire. Robert tries the gun again, nothing. Robert tries again.*

**Chris** BANG!

**Chris** *falls to the floor. Robert lowers the gun where it explodes loudly, hurting his hand.*

**Robert** Argh! My fingers!

**Dennis** The officers are waiting in the hall, si . . .

**Dennis** *enters through the downstairs door, knocking over the whole door flat with the chaise longue. Chris rolls out of the way of the falling flat, Robert moves back colliding with the fireplace flat sending that over as well. The walls at the top of the upper levels collapse. Silence. Stillness. Suddenly the window flat falls down as well, leaving Annie standing in the window frame and revealing Sandra dazed backstage. Silence. Stillness again. Max throws snow from offstage.*

**Dennis** The officers are waiting in the hall, sir.

**Jonathan** Excellent, escort my fiancée downstairs, Perkins. I wish to have a word with Thomas in private.

**Dennis and Annie** *stay, trapped in by the fallen flats.*

**Dennis** Yes, sir.

**Jonathan** Thomas! You're not the man I knew from Eton, you've become greedy and jealous!

**Robert** I'm sorry, Charles, my nerves are in shreds.

**Jonathan** There's a glass of sherry next to the telephone.

**Robert** Thank you, Charles! Ever the kind host!

**Jonathan** Drink it up.

**Robert** Most kind!

**Robert** *drinks the sherry.*

**Jonathan** Tell me, Thomas, one last thing.

**Robert** Anything, Charles. I shall tell no more lies!

**Jonathan** The glass of poisoned sherry the Inspector left out for me; what do you suppose I did with it?

**Robert** Well, I don't know . . . What do you mean? You don't mean you gave me the . . . Charley? Charley?! (*Forgets his line.*) Line!

**Trevor** (*off*) Just die, for Christ's sake!

**Robert** Just die, for Christ's . . . how dare you!

**Robert** *dies.* **Max** *throws snow from offstage.* **Jonathan** *moves centre. Lights fade and a spot comes up to Jonathan's left.*

**Jonathan** *walks into it. The spotlight moves a little further to the left. Jonathan moves into it again.*

**Jonathan** Oh, how I wish this could have ended differently. Thomas, your lies and deceits have led you inexorably to this end. If men allow their conscience to be governed by avarice then death and destruction shall prevail. (*With finality.*) Betrayed by my brother. (*A short snatch of 'Rio' by Duran Duran plays, then quickly cuts out.*) Cuckolded by my fiancée (*House music fades in.*) and almost murdered by my oldest friend. Let us hope we never again see a murder at Haversham Manor.

*Blackout.*

*The house tabs fly in.*



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