



THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG

HIGH SCHOOL EDITION

BY HENRY LEWIS,
JONATHAN SAYER
& HENRY SHIELDS



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG (HIGH SCHOOL EDITION)
Copyright © 2022, Mischief Worldwide Ltd.

THE PLAY THAT GOES
WRONG, MISCHIEF®
GOES WRONG®, THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG®, and MISCHIEF THEATRE® are trademarks and registered trademarks of Mischief Worldwide Ltd. www.MischiefComedy.com.

All Rights Reserved

THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG (HIGH SCHOOL EDITION) is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), or stored in any retrieval system in any way (electronic or mechanical) without written permission of the publisher.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG (HIGH SCHOOL EDITION) are controlled exclusively by Dramatists Play Service, 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. **No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of Dramatists Play Service and paying the requisite fee.**

All other rights, including without limitation motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to the appropriate person or entity indicated at www.MischiefComedy.com.

Additional copyright information concerning the West End and Broadway productions of THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG is included at the back of this volume.

NOTE ON BILLING

Anyone receiving permission to produce THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG (HIGH SCHOOL EDITION) is required to give credit to the Authors as sole and exclusive Authors of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears, including printed or digital materials for advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. Please see your production license for font size and typeface requirements.

Be advised that there may be additional credits required in all programs and promotional material. Such language will be listed under the "Additional Billing" section of production licenses. It is the licensee's responsibility to ensure any and all required billing is included in the requisite places, per the terms of the license.

SPECIAL NOTE ON SONGS/RECORDINGS

Dramatists Play Service neither holds the rights to nor grants permission to use any songs or recordings mentioned in the Play. Permission for performances of copyrighted songs, arrangements or recordings mentioned in this Play is not included in our license agreement. The permission of the copyright owner(s) must be obtained for any such use. For any songs and/or recordings mentioned in the Play, other songs, arrangements, or recordings may be substituted provided permission from the copyright owner(s) of such songs, arrangements or recordings is obtained; or songs, arrangements or recordings in the public domain may be substituted.

THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG was first presented by Mischief Theatre under the title *The Murder Before Christmas* on December 4, 2012, at the Old Red Lion Theatre, Islington, London. It was directed by Mark Bell, the designer was Henry Lewis, the lighting design was by Scott Pryce-Jones, the costume design was by Bryony Myers, the stage manager was Thomas Platt, and the general manager was Nicholas Thompson. The cast was as follows:

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| CHRIS | Henry Shields |
| JONATHAN | Stephen Leask |
| ROBERT | Henry Lewis |
| DENNIS | Jonathan Sayer |
| SANDRA | Charlie Russell |
| MAX | Dave Hearn |
| ANNIE | Nancy Zamit |
| TREVOR | Rob Falconer |

The production then extended under the title THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG on March 12, 2013, with the following cast changes:

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| JONATHAN | Henry Lewis |
| ROBERT | Greg Tannahill |
| SANDRA | Lotti Maddox |

The production then transferred to Trafalgar Studios on April 30, 2013, with the following cast changes:

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| JONATHAN | Joshua Elliott |
| ROBERT | Henry Lewis |

The production extended at Trafalgar Studios with the following cast change:

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| JONATHAN | Greg Tannahill |
|----------------|----------------|

It subsequently opened in a two-act version under the title THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG at the Duchess Theatre, London, a Nimax Theatre, on September 14, 2014. Kenny Wax & Stage Presence presented the Mischief Theatre production. It was directed by Mark Bell, the set design was by Nigel Hook, the lighting design was by Ric Mountjoy, the costume design was by Roberto Surace, the original music was by Rob Falconer, and the sound design was by Andy Johnson. The opening night cast was as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| TREVOR | Rob Falconer |
| CHRIS | Henry Shields |
| JONATHAN | Greg Tannahill |
| ROBERT | Henry Lewis |
| DENNIS | Jonathan Sayer |
| SANDRA | Charlie Russell |
| MAX | Dave Hearn |
| ANNIE | Nancy Zamit |
| JILL & FEMALE UNDERSTUDY | Alys Metcalf |
| PHIL & MALE UNDERSTUDY | Leonard Cook |

THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG opened on Broadway at the Lyceum Theatre, a Shubert Theatre, in April 2017. It was produced by Kevin McCollum, J.J. Abrams, Kenny Wax, Stage Presence Ltd., Catherine Schreiber, Ken Davenport, Double Gemini Productions/ deRoy-Brunish, Damian Arnold/TC Beech, Greenleaf Productions/ Bard-Roth, Martian Entertainment/Jack Lane/John Yonover, Lucas McMahon, and Mischief Theatre. It was directed by Mark Bell, the scenic design was by Nigel Hook, the costume design was by Roberto Surace, the lighting design was by Ric Mountjoy, the sound design was by Andrew Johnson, the associate costume designer was Lisa Zinni, the associate lighting designer was Jeremy Cunningham, and the associate sound designer was Beth Lake. The opening night cast was as follows:

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| TREVOR | Rob Falconer |
| MAX | Dave Hearn |
| ROBERT | Henry Lewis |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| SANDRA | Charlie Russell |
| DENNIS | Jonathan Sayer |
| CHRIS | Henry Shields |
| JONATHAN | Greg Tannahill |
| ANNIE | Nancy Zamit |
| UNDERSTUDIES | Matthew Cavendish (CHRIS, DENNIS, JONATHAN, MAX, TREVOR) Bryony Corrigan (ANNIE, SANDRA) Adam Daveline (CHRIS, DENNIS, MAX, ROBERT, TREVOR) Jonathan Fielding (CHRIS, DENNIS, JONATHAN, MAX, ROBERT) Amelia McClain (ANNIE, SANDRA, TREVOR) Greg Tannahill (ROBERT) Michael Thatcher (JONATHAN, ROBERT, TREVOR) |

THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG (HIGH SCHOOL EDITION) was piloted and first performed by The Woodlands High School in The Woodlands, Texas, on November 4, 2021. It was directed by Matthew Peters and Heather Collins, the set design was by Halle Howard, the lighting design was by Alexis Hamer, the costume design was by Mercer Sadlier, the sound design was by Audrey Wertz and Maggie Hanson, the hair and makeup design was by Luana Pangaio, the stage manager was Mallory Garver, the assistant stage manager was Lucas Botero, the spot operator was Rylan Niemeyer, the publicity design was by Abby Rust, and the props mistresses were Autumn Simundson and Anneliese Pridgen. The cast was as follows:

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| ANNIE | Abigail Colburn |
| TREVOR | Robben Montez |
| CHRIS | Evan Troup |
| JONATHAN | Santino Hallare |
| RACHEL | Emily Morvant |
| DENISE | McKenna Walter |
| MAX | Aaron Yohana |
| SANDRA | Izzy Whitehead |

INTRODUCTION

We're so delighted that *The Play That Goes Wrong* is now available to high schools, and we hope teachers and students alike enjoy reading the play and getting it up on its feet.

Although performing this show requires technical precision and rehearsal, the main thing we want to encourage is that you have fun working on or studying this play. Comedy is always at its best when created in a room full of laughter and explored in a space where everyone is able to express themselves freely. So stay truthful, support one another, and make sure you have a good time as you get to know the characters and the wonderful world of the Cornley Drama Society. Good luck making Mischief.

—Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer & Henry Shields

CHARACTERS

As with any play-within-a-play, you have the complication of the characters of the actors doing the play-within-the-play and the characters within the play-within-the-play. To make it a little simpler, the names are laid out below in two lists: firstly the members of the Cornley Drama Society who are putting on the play, and secondly the characters of The Murder at Haversham Manor. The text always uses the actors' names rather than the characters' names.

MEMBERS OF THE CORNLEY DRAMA SOCIETY *(in order of appearance)*

ANNIE is the company's stage manager. American accent. (F)

STAGE CREW (6–8), the Cornley Drama Society stage crew. (M/F)

TREVOR (or TAYLOR, if female) is the company's lighting and sound operator. American accent. (M/F)

CHRIS (short for Christine, if female) is the head of the drama society, directed the play and plays Inspector Carter. (M/F)

JONATHAN plays Charles Haversham. (M)

ROBERT (or RACHEL, if female) plays Thomas Colleymoore (or Mary Colleymoore). (M/F)

DENNIS (or DENISE, if female) plays Perkins. (M/F)

MAX plays Cecil Haversham and Arthur the Gardener. (M)

SANDRA plays Florence Colleymoore. (F)

The action takes place on the opening night of the Cornley Drama Society's production of The Murder at Haversham Manor by Susie H. K. Brideswell. Present day.

CHARACTERS IN *THE MURDER AT HAVERSHAM MANOR*
(in order of appearance)

CHARLES HAVERSHAM, the deceased. (M)

THOMAS (or MARY) COLLEYMOORE, Charles' old school friend. (M/F)

PERKINS, Charles' butler (or maid). (M/F)

CECIL HAVERSHAM, Charles' brother. (M)

FLORENCE COLLEYMOORE, Charles' fiancée and Thomas'/ Mary's sister. (F)

INSPECTOR CARTER, an esteemed local inspector. (M/F)

ARTHUR THE GARDENER, the gardener at Haversham Manor. (M)

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

SCRIPT NOTE

The stage direction "vamp" indicates improvised dialogue or action.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

The preshow and interval activity should be subtle, incidental and not draw the full attention of the audience. The show should not feel like it's begun until Trevor/Taylor addresses the whole audience.

A crucial thing to remember when performing this piece is to tell the story of *The Murder at Haversham Manor*. That is what the actors of Cornley are setting out to do and as such should be what the cast of *The Play That Goes Wrong* are setting out to do. The characters of the actors you will no doubt work on in detail, but their temperaments and flaws should shine through the cracks in their performances and not suffocate the action. Always try to tell the murder mystery story and play the *Haversham Manor* characters. Without that solid structure to support the comedy, the show will unravel.

Everything in the show must of course be played for truth and not for laughs or parody. For Cornley this show is not a comedy, it's a serious play, and it is so important to them all that it goes well, so when it goes wrong it hurts.

We've also found it useful to remember that the actors of the Cornley Drama Society are not bad actors but the victims of unfortunate circumstance. The comedy comes from their unwavering endeavour to continue, their bad choices in trying to get out of the situations they find themselves in and their optimistic belief that their luck will change.

The same is true of the set, costumes, lighting, sound and all other elements of the production. Everything that goes wrong should be a choice, and everything that doesn't go wrong should go perfectly or (in the case of the physical production) look perfect. The better the production looks, the more of a journey there is to the complete destruction that occurs in the later stages of the play.

In essence it is vital everyone works to present "the play that goes wrong," not "the play that's being done badly."

THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG

ACT ONE

The setting is the private rooms of Charles Haversham, a young, wealthy man of the period. The room is a wing of "Haversham Manor."

There is a fireplace s. R. with a picture of a King Charles spaniel hanging above it. Two swords hang s. R. of the fireplace on a flat, and a coal scuttle stands s. L. of the fireplace. There is a large window (open into the room) in the centre of the stage with red velvet curtains closed over it and a grandfather clock to the left of it, with the time set to five o'clock. There is a door in between the fireplace and window. A large heraldic shield hangs above the door, and a jacket hook and barometer hang on either side of it. Next to the clock flat is a bookcase packed with books (rotates) and s. L. of that is a blank flat. There is a door to the study on the s. L. side of the blank flat.

A chaise longue littered with cushions stands D.S. L; a small table stands D.S. R. with a telephone and a vase on it. D.S. L. of the study door is another small table set with a tray of glasses.

Set apart from the stage is a tech box complete with computer, faders and littered with empty drinks cans, etc. The tech box is visible to the audience and is where Trevor/Taylor will be seen operating lights and sound for the show.

Dramatic house music plays.

PRESHOW ACTIVITY:

As the audience enters, Trevor/Taylor is finishing off hammering the set into place.

Two members of stage crew are searching the theatre for a missing Duran Duran CD and for Winston, a dog needed for later in the show.*

Chris greets members of the audience as they arrive, in his/her best tuxedo.

Annie is by the fireplace, trying to stick a mantelpiece above it and trying to stick an old journal to the mantelpiece. She enlists the help of an audience member and gets them to hold the mantelpiece in place before disappearing offstage. Trevor/Taylor appears and commandeers the audience member to sweep the stage. As they start sweeping, the head of the broom falls off. Annie reappears and brings the audience member back to help with the mantelpiece. She sends them to get her tool kit. The mantelpiece is eventually stuck in position over the fireplace and the audience member is sent back to their seat.

Trevor/Taylor comes to D.S. C. Annie scuttles off.

TREVOR/TAYLOR. Good evening, ladies and gentle—

The mantelpiece falls off the wall. Annie emerges from the wing.

ANNIE. (To the audience member.) You said that was fine.

TREVOR/TAYLOR. (Aside to Annie.) Just leave it, leave it.

Annie and stagehands start to try and repair the mantelpiece. Trevor/Taylor address the audience.

Okay, welcome to *The Murder at Haversham Manor*. Can I kindly request that all your cell phones and other electronic devices are switched off and please note that photography of any kind is strictly prohibited. Also if anyone finds a Duran Duran** CD box set anywhere in the auditorium, that is a personal item and I want that

* If music by a different band is used on pages 45 and 77, adjust this activity appropriately.

** If music by a different band is used on pages 45 and 77, change "Duran Duran" appropriately.

back. Please drop it at my tech box at the end of the show. Enjoy the performance.

House and stage lights go down. Trevor/Taylor exits s. l.

(On his/her radio but broadcast to the whole theatre.) Alright, can we prepare for lights up on Act One, note for the cast Winston is still missing, we need to find him before the guard dog scene—

CHRIS. Trevor! Trevor!/Taylor! Taylor!

TREVOR/TAYLOR. *(Still over the speakers.)* —we need him back in his cage as soon as possible. What's Annie doing onstage? Get her off so Chris can do his/her stupid speech—oop!

Trevor's/Taylor's microphone cuts off. Annie and stagehands haven't finished repairing the mantelpiece. Chris enters from the s. r. wing in the darkness.

CHRIS. Leave it. Just leave it.

ANNIE. You need it...

CHRIS. We don't have time.

Annie hurries off into the wings, taking the mantelpiece and tool kit with her. Spotlight comes up on Chris, cutting off his/her head.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and...

Chris steps forward into the spotlight.

...welcome to the Cornley Drama Society's presentation of *The Murder at Haversham Manor*. Please allow me to introduce myself; I am Chris (*Chris short for Christine if female.*), the director, and I would like to personally welcome you to what will be my directorial debut and my first production as head of the drama society.

Firstly, I would like to apologise to those of you involved in our little box office mix-up. I do hope the six hundred and seventeen (*Change house size as appropriate.*) of you affected will enjoy our little murder mystery just as much as you would have enjoyed *Hamilton*. (*Change to a name of a show playing at a theatre nearby.*)

We are particularly excited to present this play because, for the first time in the society's history, we've managed to find a play that fits the number of society members perfectly. If we're honest a lack of members has sometimes hampered past productions, such as last

year's Chekhov play... *Two Sisters*. Last Christmas' *The Lion and the Wardrobe*. Or indeed our summer musical, *Cat*.

Of course, this will be the first time the society has been able to stage a play of this scale and we are thrilled. It's no secret we usually have to contend with a small budget, as was evident in our recent production of Roald Dahl's classic *James and the Peach*. Of course during the run of that particular show the peach we had went off, and we were forced to present a hastily devised alternative entitled *James! Where's Your Peach?*

Anyway, on to the main event, which I am confident will be our best show yet! So, ladies and gentlemen, without any further ado, please put your hands together—

If the audience starts to clap too early, Chris can say "not yet."
—for Susie H. K. Brideswell's thrilling whodunit—*The Murder at Haversham Manor*.

Chris exits into the s. r. wing. Spotlight down. Trevor/Taylor takes up his/her position in the tech box. Darkness. Music.

Jonathan (playing Charles Haversham) enters through the darkness from the s. r. wing. He trips and falls over. The lights suddenly come up on Jonathan on the floor. He freezes. The lights go out again. Jonathan takes up his position: dead on the chaise longue, with his arm outstretched onto the floor. The lights come up again just before he's fully in position.

Knocking at the s. r. door. Robert/Rachel (playing Thomas/ Mary Colleymoore) and Dennis/Denise (playing Perkins the Butler/Maid) can be heard behind it.

ROBERT/RACHEL. (Off.) Charley! Are you ready? We're all waiting downstairs to raise a glass to your engagement. Charley?

Robert/Rachel knocks on the door.

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.) Charley? Hang it all, Charley, if you won't come out, we'll come in.

He/She tries handle.

Damn it, he's locked the door. Hand me those keys, Perkins.

DENNIS/DENISE. (Off.) Here they are Mr./Miss Colleymoore.

ROBERT/RACHEL. (Off.) Thank you, Perkins. Let's get this door open. We're coming in, Charley! We're coming in!

Robert/Rachel tries to open the door, but it won't budge. Dennis/Denise and Robert/Rachel hammer on the door to try and open it.

(Still off.) There we are. We're in.

Robert/Rachel and Dennis/Denise dart around the side of the set to enter.

But what's this? Charles, unconscious?

DENNIS/DENISE. Asleep surely, Mr./Miss Colleymoore.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Damn it, Perkins, I hope so.

DENNIS/DENISE. I'll take his pulse.

Dennis/Denise takes Jonathan's pulse on his forehead. Jonathan slowly tilts his head to move Dennis'/Denise's fingers down onto his neck.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Blast! I knew something must have been wrong, it's not like Charles to disappear like this.

DENNIS/DENISE. Sir/Ma'am, he's dead!

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. Damn it, Perkins, he can't be! He's my oldest friend.

DENNIS/DENISE. He's not breathing, sir/ma'am, and there's no hint of a heartbeat.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Well I'm dumbfounded. He was right as—

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

—rain an hour ago.

DENNIS/DENISE. I don't understand. He can't be dead. He was as fit as a fiddle. It doesn't make sense.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Of course it makes sense. He's been murdered!

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

Good God. Where's Florence?

DENNIS/DENISE. She's in the dining room, sir/ma'am. Shall I fetch her?

ROBERT/RACHEL. At once, Perkins, and quickly.

DENNIS/DENISE. But she's bound to have one of her hysterical episodes.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Charles! Dead! What a horror.

Robert/Rachel crosses the stage and steps on Jonathan's hand again. He/She removes his jacket/her shawl.

But do you think it was murder, Perkins?

Robert/Rachel hangs the jacket/shawl up on a hook on the wall.

Or do you think perhaps—

The hook holding the jacket/shawl falls to the floor.

—it was suicide?

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

DENNIS/DENISE. Suicide? Mr. Haversham? Not possible! Never was there 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?

ROBERT/RACHEL. But why on earth would anybody want to murder him? Charles was such a gentle fellow.

DENNIS/DENISE. Generous, kind, a true... (*Reads a word written on his/her hand.*) philanthropist. (*Pronounced "phill-an-throp-ist."*) He never had an enemy in his life.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Until today, it seems.

DENNIS/DENISE. Shall I telephone the police, sir/ma'am?

ROBERT/RACHEL. The police? They wouldn't make it out here for days in this snowstorm.

Robert/Rachel opens the curtains to reveal falling paper snowflakes.

No.

Robert/Rachel closes the curtains again.

I'll telephone Inspector Carter, he/she lives just the other side of the village.

He/She picks up receiver.

He'll/She'll be here in next to no time. Hand me the phone, Perkins.

Robert/Rachel realises he/she already has the receiver.

Thank you, Perkins.

Dennis/Denise sits on Jonathan.

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 murdered Charles Haversham!

Lights change to red. A musical spike plays again. The lights shift back to the general state but the music continues. It cuts out briefly.

That's right.

The music continues. Dennis/Denise keeps trying to get up, thinking the spike will stop, and repeatedly sits back down on Jonathan until he pushes him/her off.

That's right!

TREVOR/TAYLOR. (Over the speakers.) Sound effect error on cue four.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Thank you.

He/She hangs up.

He's/She's on his/her way.

DENNIS/DENISE. Inspector Carter?

ROBERT/RACHEL. They say he's/she's the best damn inspector in the district, he'll/she'll crack this case and quick.

Robert/Rachel crosses the stage, stepping on Jonathan's hand again.

DENNIS/DENISE. Very good, sir/ma'am, and what shall I do?

ROBERT/RACHEL. Lock every door, man./Lock every door.

Robert/Rachel crosses the stage again. Dennis/Denise follows.

Jonathan sharply moves his hand out of the way of Robert's/Rachel's foot. Once Robert/Rachel has passed, Jonathan replaces his hand. Dennis/Denise treads on it as he/she follows Robert/Rachel past the chaise longue.

Not a soul gets out of Haversham Manor until the killer is found.

DENNIS/DENISE. At once, sir/ma'am.

ROBERT/RACHEL. ...And assemble everyone in here.

DENNIS/DENISE. Right away, sir/ma'am.

Dennis/Denise goes to leave through the s. r. door, but it still won't budge.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Good God! Charles Haversham murdered at his own engagement party!

Robert/Rachel sees Dennis/Denise stuck onstage and repeats his/her line to stall.

Good God! Charles Haversham murdered at his own engagement party! What a grim, grim night.

He/She turns sharply to the door.

Florence!

We hear a bang as Sandra tries to get in through the s. r. door.

SANDRA. (Off.) Charley! No! I can't believe what I'm seeing.

Robert/Rachel goes to try and open the door. Sandra appears in the window, holding apart the curtains.

My God, he looks so frail lying there. His skin is cold to the touch.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Don't touch him, Florence.

SANDRA. I must!

ROBERT/RACHEL. You mustn't!

SANDRA. You controlling brute/fiend, unhand me!

Robert/Rachel pretends to release Sandra's hand.

Oh, who could do such a thing? The night of our engagement party. Cecil, quick! Your brother's dead.

DENNIS/DENISE. This way, Mr. Haversham.

MAX. (Off.) I'm coming, Miss Colleymoore!

We hear three loud bangs on the door. On the third, the door

suddenly bursts open, revealing Max, Annie and members of stage crew who had all been attempting to open it.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Get out, you idiots.

They all quickly run off.

MAX. My brother? Dead? It can't be!

Sandra now enters through the door.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Calm yourself, Cecil. Pour him a stiff drink, Perkins.

DENNIS/DENISE. Right away, sir/ma'am. Charles always kept his scotch right there on the side table.

MAX. You know my brother had the finest collection of scotch in all the county.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Don't you think I know that, Cecil? He was my best friend.

MAX. Well he was my brother, Thomas/Mary.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Hang it all, Charley dead.

SANDRA. My fiancé dead, I can't bear it.

ROBERT/RACHEL. You aren't to leave my sight this evening, Florence.

Dennis/Denise goes to the D.S. L. table and produces the full bottle of scotch.

DENNIS/DENISE. Oh my God! He's drunk the whole bottle, sir/ma'am. There's not a drop left.

Realizing his/her mistake, he/she goes to the coal scuttle and empties the bottle into it.

There's not a drop left!

The bottle is now empty.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Hang it all, there's another on the table.

Dennis/Denise produces the empty bottle he/she should have got the first time.

DENNIS/DENISE. Yes, sir/ma'am, of course you're right, this one's full.

Dennis/Denise puts the bottle onto the tray of short glasses

on the D.S. L. table and carries the tray past the window. As Dennis/Denise passes the window, Annie/Stagehand leans through and exchanges the empty bottle for a full plastic bottle labeled "PAINT THINNER" with a large flammable symbol on it. Dennis/Denise doesn't see the switch.

ROBERT/RACHEL. This is horrifying. I mean who on earth would have a motivation to murder Charles Haversham?

SANDRA. I can't imagine!

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. As am I, Cecil. As am I.

MAX. My brother, murdered in his own home! This is unthinkable!

SANDRA. This is more than my nerves can take. I simply can't stand it. Thomas/Mary, I think I'm becoming hysterical!

ROBERT/RACHEL. No, Florence! Not another one of your episodes. Calm yourself. Here, take one of your pills.

MAX. Oh Florence, this is unbearable.

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

Thomas/Mary, I feel I shall pass out.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Perkins! Pour that man a stiff drink!

Dennis/Denise arrives at D.S. R. and offers a glass to Max.

MAX. Thank you, Perkins.

ROBERT/RACHEL. There, there, Florence, well done, deep breaths.

Dennis/Denise pours the paint thinner into Max's glass. Sandra becomes calmer.

SANDRA. This is terrible, just a week after our engagement.

MAX. Well here's to a good brother.

Max raises his glass and drinks the paint thinner. He quickly spits it back out.

That's the best whiskey I've ever tasted.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Have another, to calm your nerves.

MAX. Make it a double!

Dennis/Denise pours Max another glass of paint thinner.

SANDRA. Oh my Charles! My Charles! My head is spinning!

Max drinks it again. He spits it out again.

MAX. Calm down, Florence.

DENNIS/DENISE. Another scotch, sir?

MAX. Yes!

SANDRA. I can't believe he sat up here alone, drinking, when he was supposed to be downstairs with us.

Max drinks again and spits it out again, this time right into Jonathan's face, who sits up in shock. Beat. Robert/Rachel pushes Jonathan back down onto the chaise longue.

MAX. My... (*Lets out a throaty squeak, the paint thinner burning his mouth.*) My brother wasn't as happy as people were led to believe. Behind that cheery mask lay a darker side to the man that many didn't know about.

DENNIS/DENISE. It's true, his smile was often merely (*Reads from his/her hand.*) a facade. (*Pronounced "fu-cayde."*) I was fortunate enough to be one of the few people who he really confided in. Damn it all, I've lost a true friend today.

ROBERT/RACHEL. We all have, Perkins. Hang it, I knew Charley ever since grade school.

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. You'll move back home with me. I'm your brother/sister and I'll have it no other way.

MAX. Perkins is right, my brother was hiding a deep sense of melancholy and resentment. I have no doubt in my mind it was suicide.

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

DENNIS/DENISE. Suicide, Mr. Haversham? How can you say that! Of course not, it's murder. Murder in the first degree.

MAX. Nonsense!

Max performs a gesture for "nonsense." If the audience laughs, Max can acknowledge them here by smiling and repeating the gesture.

Nonsense! My brother was paranoid and jealous and I can prove it. Perkins, hand me his journal, it's there on the mantelpiece.

Annie's hand reaches through the door and holds the journal against the wall where it should have been above the fireplace. Dennis/Denise passes it to Max.

Thank you, Perkins. 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 loved Charles with all my heart.

Dennis/Denise takes the journal and puts it back where the mantelpiece should be; it falls straight to the floor. Annie's hand reaches back through the door to catch it, but she is just too late.

MAX. As I said: driven mad with paranoia and jealousy.

All gasp and face out. Silence. The cast waits for a sound effect that doesn't happen. Eventually Trevor/Taylor realises he's/ she's missed his/her cue.

TREVOR/TAYLOR. Oh no!

Trevor/Taylor hits a button. A loud door chime sounds.

ALL. The Inspector!

SANDRA. Thank heavens he's/she's here.

Chris (now in costume, playing Inspector Carter) enters through the door with paper snowflakes on his/her head and shoulders. He/She carries an attaché case.

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

DENNIS/DENISE. Yes, Inspector.

Chris hands his/her case to Dennis/Denise, 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. Tell me, are any of you the deceased's immediate family?

MAX. I'm Cecil Haversham. I'm his brother.

SANDRA. (*Smiling.*) I'm Florence Colleymoore. I'm his fiancée. Tonight was our engagement party.

CHRIS. I take it everyone is assembled here?

ROBERT/RACHEL. Yes. The only other member of staff is Arthur the Gardener, but I saw him and Winston leaving for the weekend hours ago.

CHRIS. Winston?

ROBERT/RACHEL. His guard dog.

CHRIS. Very well. Have you poured everyone a stiff drink?

DENNIS/DENISE. Yes, Inspector.

Dennis/Denise holds out the tray and they all take a glass.

MAX. Well then let's all raise a glass—

As the glasses are lifted, Dennis/Denise lowers the tray, hitting Jonathan on the head.

To a man we all loved, to Charles.

ALL. Charles!

They all raise their glasses and drink the paint thinner. They all spit it out and try to recover. Max holds the paint thinner in his mouth.

CHRIS. Delicious.

SANDRA. Excellent.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Lovely. That's a damn fine bottle, Perkins, what's the vintage?

DENNIS/DENISE. (*Reads the label.*) Flammable and corrosive, sir/ma'am.

CHRIS. *Listen!* You all must be distraught, but forgive me, the sooner I can begin my enquiries—

Chris deposits his/her notebook on the s. r. table.

—the sooner we can get to the bottom of this ghastly business.

Max spits out his paint thinner behind the couch. He turns back looking as casual as he can but then gags, giving himself away.

Miss Colleymoore, Mr. Haversham, please wait in the study as I examine the body.

Sandra and Max exit through the s. l. door.

DENNIS/DENISE. It's such a tragedy for a man to die just three months before he is to be married.

ROBERT/RACHEL. I can't stand it. Just look at him lying there.

DENNIS/DENISE. This is most (*Checks hand.*) morose. (*Pronounced "more-ous."*)

ROBERT/RACHEL. Morose indeed.

DENNIS/DENISE. His stillness unnerves me.

CHRIS. Seeing a cadaver for the first time can be unsettling. Check his pockets, Thomas/Mary.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Inspector.

Chris produces a tin of powder and a brush.

CHRIS. I need you to pull yourselves together and help me to dust his body for fingerprints.

Chris passes Dennis/Denise the tin and brush.

DENNIS/DENISE. Yes, Inspector.

Robert/Rachel searches Jonathan's trouser pocket but cannot find the prop letter he/she is supposed to find. After a few moments, Jonathan reaches into his inside jacket pocket and produces the letter and passes it to Robert/Rachel. Robert/Rachel quickly pretends to have taken the letter from Jonathan's trouser pocket and holds it up.

ROBERT/RACHEL. A letter?

Robert/Rachel passes the letter to Chris, who puts it in his/her pocket.

CHRIS. Now to dust the body for fingerprints.

ROBERT/RACHEL. What was that?

DENNIS/DENISE. Sir/Ma'am?

ROBERT/RACHEL. I could have sworn I just saw him breathing.

DENNIS/DENISE. Breathing, sir/ma'am—

*Dennis/Denise drops the tin of powder onto Jonathan's face.
Jonathan tries to hide his coughing.*

CHRIS. Nonsense, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore. This man is dead.
Jonathan coughs.

Thank you. Now that I have finished examining the body, perhaps you would take it down to the service quarters for the coroner to collect in the morning.

DENNIS/DENISE. Yes, Inspector.

*Over the next few lines, Dennis/Denise brings in a stretcher.
Robert/Rachel and Dennis/Denise lay the stretcher on the
floor in front of the chaise longue.*

CHRIS. (Goes to door and shouts.) Miss Colleymoore and Mr. Haversham, if you could please return.

Sandra and Max enter.

MAX. Any ideas as to the cause of death, Inspector?

CHRIS. Could be a number of things. Strangulation, suffocation, poison. Before the coroner fully examines the body I wouldn't like to say.

SANDRA. Poison, Inspector? Surely not.

*Robert/Rachel and Dennis/Denise try to lift Jonathan up
but can't; Jonathan is still coughing.*

CHRIS. Try not to think about it, Miss Colleymoore.

*Robert/Rachel and Dennis/Denise slowly start to roll Jonathan
off of the chaise. Chris slows down his/her lines as he/she
watches.*

As soon as I've...finished...

*Jonathan opens his eyes and looks frightened. Eventually he
tips off of the chaise longue and falls hard face-down onto
the floor.*

*I'll speak to everyone individually and then you can get some space
to calm your nerves.*

*Robert/Rachel and Dennis/Denise lift the stretcher up; the
canvas tears off of the stretcher and Robert/Rachel and Dennis/
Denise are left holding just the poles. Beat. Robert/Rachel*

and Dennis/Denise then carry the poles off through the s. R. door, leaving Jonathan on the floor.

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

CHRIS. I shall return presently, as soon as we have called the coroner. Perkins, please lock all the doors and be careful carrying the body.

Chris exits, slowly shutting the door behind him/her, staring at Jonathan as he/she goes. Pause.

MAX. Well—

Jonathan realises that he is meant to have been carried off and suddenly starts to get up, making Max and Sandra jump slightly. They stare at Jonathan, who, trying not to be seen, exits towards the door, taking the stretcher canvas with him. He tries the door but can't get out, hides behind the curtains, continues coughing.

Well thank God they've all gone.

During the following lines, Jonathan is trying to find exits, still coughing.

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

MAX. We were having an affair, so what? It doesn't mean—

Max slips on a puddle of paint thinner he spit out earlier.

It doesn't mean we killed the man.

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

MAX. It's fine, we'll just carry on as if every-thing!

Max sits on the chaise longue but feels something hard under the cushions.

—is just as it was. Except—

Max lifts the cushions and discovers a ledger underneath.

Max puts it under the chaise longue.

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

SANDRA. And soon we can be together and not keep secrets.

MAX. Soon, my love, but first, with Charley finally out of the picture I must ask you one question.

Max goes down on one knee in front of Sandra.

Florence, will you do me the honour of becoming my wife? Marry me!

Jonathan cannot control the cough anymore and sneezes right in between Max and Sandra sitting on the chaise longue.

Charles is dead. He can never come between us again!

Annie opens the s. r. door and Jonathan slowly moves towards the door. Exits.

Florence, Charles is gone and he's never coming back.

SANDRA. Oh Cecil, I can't resist you! I shall, I shall marry you.

MAX. Oh Florence, come into my arms.

Max pushes Sandra away.

SANDRA. I shall!

MAX. Kiss me!

SANDRA. Oh Cecil!

Max and Sandra go to kiss with a dramatic dip, but Robert/ Rachel bursts in s. r. door.

ROBERT/RACHEL. The Inspector requires a pencil. What on earth's going on in here?

SANDRA. Sorry, I felt flustered. Cecil was cooling my brow.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Very well, now I have the pencil I'll be on my...

Robert/Rachel sees that there is no pencil on the D.S. R. table. He/She picks up the set of keys instead.

Well now I have the... well now I have the... Now I have the *pencil*. I'll be on my way.

Robert/Rachel exits, closing the door.

MAX. Thank God he's/she's gone!

SANDRA. Oh, Cecil! Kiss me a thousand times; I'm yours.

Dennis/Denise bursts in.

DENNIS/DENISE. Sorry to interrupt, Miss Colleymoore, Mr. Haversham. I've come to collect the keys to lock us all inside.

MAX. Thank you, Perkins.

Dennis/Denise sees the keys gone and instead he/she picks up the Inspector's notebook.

DENNIS/DENISE. I shall lock the doors at once.

Dennis/Denise 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/Rachel bursts in.

ROBERT/RACHEL. I forgot the Inspector's notebook... What in God's name?

SANDRA. I was about to faint. Cecil caught me.

ROBERT/RACHEL. I haven't time for this. Now...I...have...the Inspector's notebook, I'll be on my way.

Robert/Rachel sees the notebook is gone. He/She picks up the vase of flowers instead and exits.

MAX. Damn these blasted interruptions!

SANDRA. Kiss me, Cecil, I can't wait a second longer.

Pause. Dennis/Denise is supposed to have burst in. Max and Sandra look at the door.

Kiss me, Cecil, I can't wait a second longer.

Silence.

Kiss me, Cecil, I can't wait a second longer.

Max and Sandra vamp, Sandra trying to convince Max to kiss her. Eventually Max kisses Sandra, putting his entire wide open mouth over hers. Sandra recoils and falls off of the chaise longue. Dennis/Denise then bursts in, holding two candles in candlesticks.

DENNIS/DENISE. Sorry to interrupt, Mr. Haversham, Miss Colley-moore. I have come to prepare the room.

MAX. Thank you, Perkins. Just set them down on the mantelpiece.

Dennis/Denise goes to the fireplace with the candlesticks. But there is no mantelpiece to put them on. Suddenly Annie's hands burst through the fireplace. Dennis/Denise puts a candlestick in each of her hands.

That's some good work, thank you, Perkins.

Dennis/Denise exits. He/She slams the door closed, and as he/she does, the cartouche over the fireplace drops to the floor and reveals Annie's face. She stares out at the others.

At last we're alone.

Annie pulls the candlesticks back, but they are too tall and she can't pull them through the holes.

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. I have no doubt in my mind, he was killed by your brother/sister: Thomas/Mary Colleymoore.

SANDRA. My brother/sister a murderer and Charles dead? What a devil of a situation this is!

Jonathan suddenly bursts through the s. r. door, holding a gun.

JONATHAN. Not so fast, Inspector!

Max and Sandra stare at Jonathan. Pause. Jonathan realises he has come in much too early. He exits.

SANDRA. But why would Thomas/Mary want Charles dead?

MAX. Isn't it obvious? He/She—

Max falls over the chaise longue.

Argh! He/She was always bitter and possessive when it came to you!

Throughout the following dialogue, Max begins miming his speech in a panic.

He/She couldn't stand the idea of his/her best friend marrying his/her sister. He/She saw you two together at tonight's engagement party and it drove him/her half mad and he/she snapped and killed Charles!

SANDRA. But if it is Thomas/Mary, what if our affair is discovered?

MAX. I have no doubt in my mind he/she would try and kill us as well, just like he/she killed Charles!

SANDRA. Oh I feel faint again!

MAX. Don't worry, Florence. Just follow my lead.

Chris opens the s. r. door.

CHRIS. I'm sorry to have kept you.

The heraldic shield over the door swings down and hits Chris. Chris throws it offstage.

...but now I have finished examining the body our interviews can proceed. (*Calls off.*) Perkins! Bring in Charles' personal effects.

Dennis/Denise enters s. r. with lots of bulky personal props.

DENNIS/DENISE. Where would you like them, Inspector?

CHRIS. Set them down on the mantelpiece.

Chris realises what he's/she's said.

DENNIS/DENISE. As you wish, Inspector.

Dennis/Denise carries the props over to Annie, who is still holding the candlesticks. Remaining stagehands run out and become the mantel; Dennis/Denise carefully balances the items on the stagehands. Dennis/Denise is supposed to leave but doesn't. Silence.

CHRIS. Don't go, Perkins.

Dennis/Denise goes to leave and then stops.

I'd like to ask you a few questions first. Mr. Haversham, Miss Colley-moore, if you'd be so kind as to give us a moment's privacy.

MAX. Naturally.

Max and Sandra exit. Dennis/Denise sits down on the chaise longue.

CHRIS. Don't just stand there, Perkins, take a seat.

Dennis/Denise sits down again.

Go ahead. How are you feeling, Perkins?

DENNIS/DENISE. A little shaken, sir/ma'am. But I'll be fine.

CHRIS. You and Charles Haversham, you were close?

DENNIS/DENISE. Yes, sir/ma'am, very close.

Stagehands can hold the props up no more, and they come crashing to the ground; stagehands and Annie all start picking up the items loudly.

CHRIS. You don't appear very upset.

DENNIS/DENISE. On the contrary, I've barely taken it in. He was such a kindly, charming man.

CHRIS. It's true.

DENNIS/DENISE. You met him?

CHRIS. Once at the local police station. He was a consultant on a fraud case I was working on.

DENNIS/DENISE. I see.

CHRIS. How long have you been working at Haversham Manor?

DENNIS/DENISE. Eighty years.

CHRIS. Eighty years?

DENNIS/DENISE. (*Corrects him/herself.*) Eight years! Eight years.

CHRIS. Eight years. And have you enjoyed your time here?

DENNIS/DENISE. 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/maid but also as a friend and a confidant. If you need me I'll be in my quarters. Exits.

Chris stares at him/her furiously.

CHRIS. Exits!

Dennis/Denise realises and turns to go to s. r. door.

Thank you, Perkins! If you'd be so kind as to send in Florence Colley-moore on your way out.

Sandra bursts in, followed by Robert/Rachel. In the door we see stagehands with the props, and Sandra pushes past them, making them drop the props again.

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

Dennis/Denise exits.

CHRIS. At last, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore, you managed to find me a pencil?

ROBERT/RACHEL. Yes...Inspector.

Robert/Rachel holds out the keys. Pause. Chris takes them.

CHRIS. And my notebook?

Robert/Rachel holds out the vase. Pause. Chris takes it.

I knew I'd left them somewhere. I'm going to have to speak to your sister alone.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Very well. I'll be in the library, Florence.

Robert/Rachel opens the s. r. door. Dennis/Denise is knelt down in the doorway, having collected all the props. Robert/Rachel walks straight into him/her, causing Dennis/Denise to drop them all again as Robert/Rachel closes the door behind him/her.

Dennis!/Denise!

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

SANDRA. Twenty-one.

CHRIS. I'll make a note of that.

Chris tries to make a note by dragging one of the keys across the side of the vase. It clinks as it goes across the cut glass.

And when were you engaged to be married?

SANDRA. In the new year.

Chris writes on the vase again.

CHRIS. And when did you and your fiancé first meet?

SANDRA. Only seven months ago, but my brother/sister has known him since school. He/She 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.

Pause.

CHRIS. (Ad-libs.) Ah, I've run out of paper.

Chris puts the keys and vase down on the s. r. table. Sandra comes in a line too early, causing the lines to go out of sync. The two become more frantic as they try to get back on track.

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. But where did you find it?

CHRIS. I found your letter; the one addressed to Cecil, written in your hand, declaring your love for him and saying that the thought of marrying Charles repulsed you.

SANDRA. Charles read it—

CHRIS. (*Does Sandra's line for her in a high voice.*) But where did you find it? (*Back to his/her normal voice.*) I'll tell you where I found it: in Charles' pocket!

SANDRA. Charles read it?! Then it was suicide!

Trevor/Taylor misses his/her cue, so Sandra repeats the line three times. On the third time, lights snap to red. Dramatic musical spike. Lights snap back to the general state.

CHRIS. *Indeed!* (*Returning to a calmer delivery.*) Or a murder, conceived by yourself and Cecil Haversham so you could run away together.

SANDRA. You diabolical beast. How can you? I won't stand for this, Inspector. Accuse me again and you'll be sorr...

Robert/Rachel bursts in s. r., followed by Max; the door hits Sandra sharply on the head and she collapses, unconscious. Trevor/Taylor picks up a first-aid kit and heads out of his/her box.

ROBERT/RACHEL. What's all this shouting?

MAX. What is this, Inspector?

Robert/Rachel and Chris see that Sandra is on the floor. Max looks at Chris and doesn't see what's happened to Sandra.

CHRIS. I'm merely interviewing Miss Colleymoore, nothing more.

MAX. What's the matter, Florence?

Max turns to see Sandra on the floor.

Calm down! Stop shouting.

Sandra remains unconscious.

ROBERT/RACHEL. 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/RACHEL. Come back here this instant.

Sandra remains unconscious. Robert/Rachel looks back to Max and Chris.

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' brother after all.

Robert/Rachel exits S. L.

MAX. I'm sorry about her, Inspector, she's badly shaken, we all are. It's been—

Max almost walks into the chaise longue, but misses it.

—quite the night and it's getting late.

CHRIS. Indeed. Eleven o'clock already.

Chris looks at the clock. The hands are at five o'clock.

MAX. Well do you have any questions for me, Inspector?

CHRIS. Yes, similar questions to those I asked Miss Colleymoore.

MAX. Fire away, Inspector, I'm at your service.

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

MAX. Up and down. There was rather more strain on our relationship when father died. And it was no secret that our father cared for Charley more than myself.

CHRIS. I see. This is your father in the portrait, is it not?

Chris turns to the portrait above the fireplace. It is of a dog.

MAX. It is.

CHRIS. He was the spitting image of Charles, wasn't he?

MAX. He was ever since he was quite young, yes.

CHRIS. You were the junior by four years?

MAX. Almost four and didn't I know it.

Annie and cast/crew stick hands through the window and drag Sandra towards them. Her body is slammed against the bottom of the flat.

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.

Sandra's body is hoisted roughly up behind the curtain and then dropped back down.

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

More of the cast backstage joins in to help.

MAX. I won't lie, Inspector, Charles and I never truly saw—

Max turns and sees what is going on behind him as Sandra is roughly lifted and dropped again.

—eye to eye! But if you're suggesting I had something to do with his murder then you're mistaken.

CHRIS. I see. It's a dark night, Cecil.

MAX. Inspector!

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

CHRIS. You can barely even make out the trees.

Silence. Then Chris and Max turn back downstage. As Max continues with his next line, Robert/Rachel, Trevor/Taylor, Annie, Jonathan and stagehands continue to remove Sandra, but more noisily than before. Vamp shouting at each other,

yelling instructions on how best to carry Sandra out. Max and Chris shout their lines over them.

MAX. *What are you saying, Inspector?*

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

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

CHRIS. **AND YET YOU HAD AN AFFAIR WITH HIS FIANCÉE?**

The group in the window drop Sandra and start again.

MAX. **WHAT ON EARTH GAVE YOU THAT IDEA?**

CHRIS. **THIS LETTER I FOUND IN CHARLES' POCKET FROM MISS COLLEYMOORE TO YOURSELF.**

MAX. **YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?**

CHRIS. **I DO! AS, IT SEEMS...DID...CHARLES!!**

The others have managed to get Sandra out of the window. Annie sharply draws the curtains.

MAX. Well bravo, Inspector! You've found out about Florence and I, but it proves nothing.

Panicking, Max begins to mime his speech as he says it, building faster and faster to a climax.

We had nothing to do with Charles' murder, but Thomas/Mary Colleymoore does. Oh Inspector, he's/she's a dangerously unhinged man/woman, with a devil of a temper and Florence is his/her sister. Now I've said it once before and I shall say it once again: He/Mary couldn't stand the idea of giving her/Florence up to any man. He/She saw them together at tonight's engagement party and he/she lost control and he/she lashed out at Charles. A crime of passion perhaps, but there it is!

Max strikes a pose.

CHRIS. Thank you, Mr. Haversham, you've been most helpful.

If Max's speech gets a round of applause, Max takes a bow and vamps, bowing as many times as he can and clapping himself until Chris bellows, "Thank you, Mr. Haversham," and stops him.

Thank you, Mr. Haversham!...you've been most helpful. Perhaps you could fetch Thomas/Mary Colleymoore. I'm going to have 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 trips over the chaise longue again. He recovers and exits.

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

Chris sits on the chaise longue.

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

Chris lifts up the cushions; there is no ledger. He/She begins to search for it around the chaise longue. Chris vamps to cover, repeating "A ledger?" over and over, becoming more desperate. He/She calls offstage for the ledger, at first in fury then eventually in despair. There is sometimes a bit of audience interaction here. Often an audience member will shout, "It's underneath," or something similar, to which Chris can respond:

"What?"

Audience member repeats.

"What?"

Audience member repeats.

"This is not a game show."

Chris responds to the audience laugh.

"Stop laughing! Stop laughing!"

He/She repeats as the audience continue to laugh.

"This is not like television, I can see you as well!"

Chris finally sees the ledger under the chaise longue.

Ahh! A ledger! (Repeats the line again quietly as if he/she has seen the ledger for the first time.) A ledger...with Charles' initials inscribed on the cover. Let me see. Notes, bills... What's this?

Chris takes a folded document tied up with ribbon out of the ledger.

A newly written last will and testament dated only today? Let me see...

Chris tries to untie the ribbon on the document, but he/she can't. He/She reads off of the closed document by putting it to his/her forehead.

"I, Charles Haversham, hereby amend my last will and testament to leave my money, possessions and Haversham Manor to one..." Good Lord!

Max and Robert/Rachel enter s. l. Chris hurriedly puts the will back into the ledger.

MAX. Inspector. Thomas/Mary Colleymoore for you.

CHRIS. Thank you, Cecil, but before I question Mr./Miss Colleymoore I have some papers I'd like to review in Charles' study. I shall return presently.

MAX. Do take your time, Inspector.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Indeed.

Chris heads into study s. l. and slams the door, causing the barometer, hook and dog painting to fall off the wall. Max picks up the barometer and hook; Robert/Rachel picks up the dog painting. They hold the items up, trying to put them back on the wall during the following lines.

MAX. Tell me, Thomas/Mary, did you manage to find Florence?

ROBERT/RACHEL. She ran out into the grounds.

MAX. And what were your feelings about Charles and Florence's engagement?

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

Both step back, thinking everything is in place. Everything falls again; they switch positions and items.

MAX. Come now, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore, it's well known that you're overprotective of your sister.

Just as Max gets the painting up into position, the telephone rings. They look at it, unsure of how they will answer it.

I'll get it.

Max tries hard to keep holding the picture against the wall and reaches for the phone. The phone keeps ringing; finally

he tries to hook it with his foot. The receiver falls off of the telephone and further away on the floor.

Good evening.

Beat.

It's for you.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Who the devil is it?

MAX. Your accountants, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore.

ROBERT/RACHEL. At half past eleven in the evening?

MAX. Yes.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Then hand me the receiver, Cecil.

Max slides the receiver in between his feet and manages to throw it up with his feet and catch it in his free hand. Vamp with the audience here if they respond. Max can show off by throwing it up again and catching it, then repeating and dropping it even further away than it was before and having to pick it up again. Max stretches and passes the receiver to Robert/Rachel, who puts it to his/her ear, keeping the barometer in place with his/her foot.

(*In extreme discomfort.*) Good evening. Yes, Thomas/Mary Colleymoore 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/Denise enters through the s. r. door as far as he/she can, knocking Robert/Rachel down to his/her knees, struggling to keep everything in place.

DENNIS/DENISE. Yes, sir/ma'am.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Bring me my bankbook, Perkins.

Dennis/Denise produces the bankbook.

DENNIS/DENISE. Your bankbook, sir/ma'am.

Dennis/Denise puts the bankbook into Robert's/Rachel's mouth.

ROBERT/RACHEL. (*Muffled by the book.*) Thank you, Perkins.

DENNIS/DENISE. Your pen, sir/ma'am.

Dennis/Denise produces a pen and forces it into Robert's/Rachel's mouth as well.

ROBERT/RACHEL. (Even more muffled.) Thank you, Perkins.

Robert/Rachel rearranges him/herself to take the phone again.

This is an absolute disgrace! Who am I speaking with? I'll report you to your superiors. Mr. Fitzroy. I'll write that name down.

Robert/Rachel writes "Mr. Fitzroy" in the bankbook with a lot of difficulty.

Mr... Fi...tz...roy...ro...ro...oy I'll have you know this telephone call has put me in a very difficult position. Now look here, Fitzroy, I didn't authorise this transaction, but you find out who did and you call me back.

Robert/Rachel throws the phone to Max, who hangs it up.

MAX. What is it, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore?

ROBERT/RACHEL. Nine thousand pounds taken from my private savings.

MAX. Good Lord!

ROBERT/RACHEL. What a ghastly evening.

MAX. Thomas/Mary, I'm afraid I have a confession to make.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Mm?

MAX. Well... Florence and I are having an affair!

ROBERT/RACHEL. WHAT?!

Robert/Rachel launches him/herself at Max, who dives D.S. The dog picture, hook and barometer mysteriously all stay hung in their positions. Robert/Rachel and Max double-take.

You and my sister?!

Robert/Rachel throws Max S. L.

MAX. Now calm down, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore.

ROBERT/RACHEL. You always were a snake in the grass, Cecil.

Robert/Rachel throws Max D.S.

MAX. It's not what you think! We're in love!

Robert/Rachel pulls Max up by his hair and throws him over

the chaise longue. Robert/Rachel draws a sword from s. R. of the fireplace.

ROBERT/RACHEL. 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, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore!
ROBERT/RACHEL. The time has come for you to answer to me for your indiscretions. Draw your swo...

Robert/Rachel turns to see Max's sword is already drawn.

En garde!

They fight a few slick choreographed moves.

Nice try, Cecil, but no match for my skill. You know sometimes I forget you're Charley's brother, you're so pathetic.

They fight again. Robert/Rachel jumps over the chaise longue.

MAX. I always was too—

Max flips over the chaise longue.

—quick for you, but still not bad, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore.

Max looks fine for a moment but then collapses out of sight behind the chaise longue. Max starts to get back to his feet.

We hear a metallic snapping sound. Max slowly pulls his sword up from behind the chaise, revealing that it's broken (now just a handle and a short stump of blade). Max makes sword clanging sound effects as they continue fighting.

Ching! Ching! Ching!

ROBERT/RACHEL. Rattle! Clang!

MAX. Ching!

ROBERT/RACHEL. Swipe!

MAX. Slice!

ROBERT/RACHEL. Ah, 'tis nothing.

MAX. Have at you, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore! Ching! Ching!
Ching!

Max beats Robert/Rachel to the floor s. L. and does two victory swipes as he walks away.

Yes! Swipe Swipe! You've got a good parry, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Good parry? I'll show you a good parry!

Robert/Rachel lunges at Max, and Max backs up and falls on a s. l. chair, sitting on it. The sword narrowly misses Max's crotch and ends up stuck in the chair between his legs.

I'll show you a good parry!

ROBERT/RACHEL and MAX. Ching! Ching!

ROBERT/RACHEL. Slash!

MAX. Disarm!

Max throws his broken piece of sword s. R.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Slash!

Max pulls three red strips of fabric blood out of a hole in his jumper.

MAX. Blood! Aaaah!

Max vamps with the audience, miming and doing the sounds of the blood squirting and then pouring from his wound.

ROBERT/RACHEL. I don't need this to kill a man like you, Haversham!

Robert/Rachel throws Max to the floor.

It seems there's no mystery as to who killed Charles anymore.

Robert/Rachel drags Max to the door.

He was killed by his own vile little brother in a fit of jealous rage. You'll be sorry you ever laid a finger on my sister, Haversham. You'll be sorry!

Robert/Rachel exits, slamming the door. The dog picture, hook, barometer, curtains and curtain rails all crash down off of the wall. Dennis/Denise runs in through the s. l. door and puts the tray down by the telephone. Three loud gunshots and Max screaming are heard off stage.

DENNIS/DENISE. Gunshots!

Robert/Rachel enters through s. R. door.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Inspector! Inspector! Where's Inspector Carter?

Chris struggles with the s. l. door; we hear banging. The door finally opens and Chris pushes past stagehands.

There you are, Inspector. 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/RACHEL. Indeed.

CHRIS. It is important we remain calm and we don't let each other out of our sight. Where's your sister, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore?

ROBERT/RACHEL. She's coming now. Get in here, Florence.

Jonathan opens the s. r. door and pushes Annie onstage. Annie is wearing Sandra's dress over her own clothes and clutches a script.

Florence, you don't look yourself this evening.

ANNIE. (Reading each word slowly from her script.) Thomas/Mary, I'm frightened.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Don't worry, Florence; you're safe here with me.

DENNIS/DENISE. What's happening, sir/ma'am?

CHRIS. Isn't it obvious? Cecil has lost control.

ANNIE. Oh no not Cecil. (Pronounced "ke-sill.")

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 (Again pronounced "ke-sill.") would not do such a thing.

DENNIS/DENISE. Well this is a fine mess. The worst night I've seen in eighty— (Corrects him/herself.) eight years of service.

ANNIE. Save me, brother/sister.

Annie goes to Chris, who pushes her back to Robert/Rachel.

Ooh, save me, brother/sister.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Don't worry, Florence. I shan't let anyone hurt a hair on your head.

ANNIE. I'm panicking.

Annie does a physical action to show she is panicking.

I can't believe...Cecil— (Still pronounced "ke-sill.")

CHRIS. *Cecil!*

ANNIE. Cecil...is doing this.

DENNIS/DENISE. Try to relax, Miss Colleymoore.

ANNIE. I shall faint.

ROBERT/RACHEL. You shan't faint—

Annie falls back without warning. Dennis/Denise just catches her.

—*confound it!* What a devil of a situation this is. Now—

Jonathan bursts in, holding his gun.

JONATHAN. Not so fast, Insp... (Realises.) oh for God's sake!

Jonathan realises he is still too early and exits.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Now we're—

Jonathan walks past the window, his head in his hand. He slowly realises the audience can see him. Mortified, he lowers himself out of view.

Now we're all going to survive tonight, you hear me?

Chris peers out of the door.

CHRIS. Take cover!

ROBERT/RACHEL. Great Scott!

DENNIS/DENISE. Good heavens!

ANNIE. Ay me!

CHRIS. Don't panic, Cecil is crossing the landing. We must lock him out.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Quickly, where are the keys to the door, Perkins?

DENNIS/DENISE. Here they are, sir/ma'am.

Dennis/Denise pulls out the Inspector's notebook from his/her pocket. Chris runs to the keys on the s. r. table, tosses keys to Dennis/Denise, who then throws them back to Chris.

Here they are, sir/ma'am.

CHRIS. Hand them to me quickly, Perkins, before Cecil bursts in—

The door bursts open and Max staggers inside. Still doing the blood with the red streamers.

DENNIS/DENISE. No!

ROBERT/RACHEL. No!

Max shuffles forward a few paces and then flops dead onto the chaise longue.

Good Lord!

Lights shift to red and the short musical spike plays. Then the lights shift back.

ANNIE. Cecil's dead?

Lights shift to red again. The same short musical spike plays. The lights shift back.

DENNIS/DENISE. A double murder!

The lights turn to red and a short burst of an English new wave song like "Girls on Film" by Duran Duran plays. Then the correct musical spike cuts in. The lights shift back.*

TREVOR/TAYLOR. Found the Duran Duran.**

CHRIS. Time of death: quarter to mid...

Chris looks at the clock. It still reads five o'clock.

Five o'clock.

ANNIE. Cecil! No. No. No. I loved him. I loved him. I know it was wrong. I know I was engaged to Charles.

She makes a noise of realisation—Annie was unaware of this bit of the story.

—but Cecil was mine and.

Silence. Chris turns the page in her script.

...I was his.

DENNIS/DENISE. There, there, Miss Colleymoore.

ANNIE. How will I go on? Sobs.

CHRIS. You! Take this body outside.

DENNIS/DENISE. Yes, Inspector.

ROBERT/RACHEL. I'll lend you a hand, Perkins.

* See Note on Songs/Recordings at the back of this volume.

** If a song by a different band is used, change "Duran Duran" appropriately.

Dennis/Denise and Robert/Rachel exit.

CHRIS. I've seen an awful lot in the twenty years I've been an Inspector.

Dennis/Denise and Robert/Rachel reenter, carrying the two stretcher poles from earlier. Dennis/Denise and Robert/Rachel lay them on the floor in front of the chaise longue and roll Max on top of them.

But two murders on one evening is certainly unusual.

Dennis/Denise and Robert/Rachel lift the poles. Max grasps them and holds on for dear life. Dennis/Denise and Robert/Rachel carry Max to the door. Dennis/Denise and Robert/Rachel can't get Max off through the door, so they rotate him ninety degrees onto his side and exit through the door. Annie shuts the door behind them.

Robert/Rachel backs up past the window, revealing Max still on the poles. Max grins at the audience; Dennis/Denise and Robert/Rachel quickly lower him out of view. Max stands up in the window and grins at the audience again. Robert/Rachel grabs him and pulls him out of sight; Max smacks his head on the edge of the window as he goes.

ANNIE. Oh Inspector, my fiancé and my lover killed on the same eve.

CHRIS. Remember your breathing, Miss Colleymoore, now is not the time for another of your episodes.

ANNIE. (Calm.) I am having an episode, Inspector. I cannot help it.

CHRIS. (Under his/her breath.) Have an episode. Have...an...episode. (Loudly.) Have an episode.

Annie tries to scream and shake as she has seen Sandra do in rehearsals. Vamp. Annie builds the episode bigger and bigger until it reaches a climax and she flops onto the chaise longue.

No, Miss Colleymoore.

Dennis/Denise and Robert/Rachel reenter.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Florence, control yourself girl.

DENNIS/DENISE. She's having another one of her hysterical episodes.

ANNIE. (*Calmly reads.*) They're dead. They're gone and they're never coming back.

ROBERT/RACHEL. I will not tolerate another tantrum, Florence.

ANNIE. (*Calm.*) Get away from me, Thomas/Mary. You don't understand my grief.

ROBERT/RACHEL. That's enough, take one of your pills.

ANNIE. No. Not more pills.

Annie takes a pill with no hesitation.

Oh, they're mints.

ROBERT/RACHEL. But who could have killed...

Annie upstages Robert/Rachel by sinking back onto the chaise longue, pretending to be knocked out by the pill.

But who could have killed him?

DENNIS/DENISE. That's a good question, Mr./Miss Colleymoore.

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/DENISE. Of course, Inspector.

Dennis/Denise pours more paint thinner 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/RACHEL. The gardener left at six, the only other member of staff is Perkins. (*Drinks and spits out the paint thinner.*) Good God, I needed that.

CHRIS. Does anyone have access to the grounds?

ANNIE. No one, Inspector.

DENNIS/DENISE. I'm the only one with a master key and as instructed I locked and bolted the doors as soon as you arrived.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Then who could have killed him?

DENNIS/DENISE. That's a good question, Mr./Miss Colleymoore.

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.

Chris and Robert/Rachel start to realise that they have been here before.

DENNIS/DENISE. Of course, Inspector.

Dennis/Denise pours paint thinner 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/RACHEL. The gardener left at six, the only other member of staff is Perkins. (*Drinks. Spits it out again.*) Good God, I needed that.

CHRIS. Does anyone have access to the grounds?

ANNIE. No one, Inspector.

DENNIS/DENISE. I'm the only one with a master key and as instructed I locked and bolted the doors as soon as you arrived.

ROBERT/RACHEL. (*Pointedly, hoping Dennis/Denise will say the correct line this time.*) Then who could have killed him?

Dennis/Denise knows something is wrong but not what, and the loop of dialogue goes around again.

DENNIS/DENISE. That's a good question, Mr./Miss Colleymoore.

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/DENISE. Of course, Inspector.

Dennis/Denise pours paint thinner 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/RACHEL. The gardener left at six, the only other member of staff is Perkins. (*Drinks. Spits.*) Good God, I needed that.

CHRIS. Does anyone have access to the grounds?

ANNIE. No one, Inspector.

DENNIS/DENISE. 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/RACHEL. *Then who could have killed him?*

Pause. All look at Dennis/Denise.

DENNIS/DENISE. That's a good question, Mr./Miss Colleymoore.

The script loops again. Much faster this time.

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/DENISE. Of course, Inspector.

Dennis/Denise pours paint thinner 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/RACHEL. The gardener left at six, the only other member of staff is Perkins. (*Drinks again. Spits out again.*) Good God, I needed that.

CHRIS. Does anyone have access to the grounds?

ANNIE. No one, Inspector.

DENNIS/DENISE. I'm the only one with a master key and as instructed I locked and bolted the doors as soon as you arrived.

ROBERT/RACHEL. *THEN WHO COULD HAVE KILLED HIM?*

Pause. Tense, everyone desperate that Dennis/Denise will get it right this time.

DENNIS/DENISE. That's a good question, Mr./Miss Colleymoore.

ROBERT/RACHEL and CHRIS. *Argh!!*

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/DENISE. Of course, Inspector.

Dennis/Denise pours paint thinner 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/RACHEL. The gardener left at six, the only other member of staff is Perkins. (*Throws the paint thinner in Dennis'/Denise's face.*) Good God, I needed that!

CHRIS. Does anyone have access to the grounds?

Chris throws his/her paint thinner in Dennis'/Denise's face as well.

ANNIE. No one, Inspector.

DENNIS/DENISE. (*In pain, the paint thinner burning his/her skin.*) I'm the only one with a master key and as instructed I locked and bolted all the doors as soon as you arrived.

Chris and Robert/Rachel grab Dennis/Denise.

ALL. Then who could have killed him?

DENNIS/DENISE. (*Realises.*) No one! YES! No one could have killed him, except for the people who are in this room.

CHRIS. Good God, you're right, it's one of us.

All gasp.

ANNIE. (*Reads.*) This is a disaster! Blackout. Intermission.

Annie realises her mistake and runs offstage.

Oh.

Blackout. Tabs fly in. Music.

End of Act One

INTERVAL ACTIVITY:

Robert/Rachel appears in the auditorium/foyer in a robe and joins the queue for ice creams. Chris appears and sends him/her backstage. Stagehands look for Winston. Max just wanders around talking to people until Chris gets him.

ACT TWO

Dramatic house music plays.

The house lights fade; shouting is heard behind the tabs. Chris emerges from under the tabs. A spotlight comes up on him/her.

CHRIS. Good evening again, ladies and gentlemen, I hope you have enjoyed the break, we will be resuming this evening's performance momentarily I am assured. I... I must say I'm delighted to see that so many of you have returned for the second act.

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 you would expect to see in any production. And this certainly hasn't been the worst first act Cornley Drama Society has seen by some stretch.

Chris gives a hollow laugh.

Just last year due to a casting error Cornley Drama Society had to present *Snow White and the Seven Tall Broad Gentlemen*. Anyway—

Chris is interrupted by Trevor's/Taylor's voice over his/her radio.

TREVOR/TAYLOR. (Over radio.) ...No, it's going quite badly to be honest.

CHRIS. Before we begin again—

TREVOR/TAYLOR. (Over radio.) Yeah, she's still unconscious and we still can't find the dog—

CHRIS. Trevor/Taylor! Before we resume the production one word of health and safety administration: Could I please ask anyone who consumed any of the salted nuts available during the intermission to please seek medical help immediately.

And now I present to you the concluding act of *The Murder at Haversham Manor*.

Chris exits s. r. Spotlight out. Music. The tabs fly out, revealing

chaos as Annie, Max, Robert/Rachel, Dennis/Denise, Jonathan and the stage crew all rehang the picture, barometer, curtains, etc. They see the audience. Chris enters from the s. r. wing. He/ She gestures offstage and the house tabs fly back in.

Beat. The house tabs fly back out, revealing Robert/Rachel, Dennis/Denise, Chris and Annie in their positions from the end of Act One. Jonathan, Max and the stage crew have gone. All wall hangings are back in position. Beat.

DENNIS/DENISE. No one could—

All wall hangings crash down to the floor. The cast clear everything into the wings.

No one could have killed him, except for the people who are 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/RACHEL. And it's not over yet! Two murders on one night at Haversham Manor, what a grizzly evening.

ANNIE. Frightful brother/sister, frightful.

DENNIS/DENISE. And look, Mr./Miss Colleymoore, the snowstorm outside is building.

Max/Stagehand appears in the window and throws snow out.

ROBERT/RACHEL. If we're not careful we'll be snowed into this slaughterhouse. We must discover the guilty person.

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

Chris exits through the s. r. door. As he/she opens it, Jonathan is revealed standing in the doorway ready to go on. He swiftly moves out of view.

ROBERT/RACHEL. This whole business is a disgrace. Now let us remind ourselves of what we know.

DENNIS/DENISE. We know that Charles Haversham was found murdered here, in his own private rooms, on the night of his engagement party.

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

ANNIE. Not now, Thomas/Mary. We know that he too was murdered on the same eve, in cold blood.

DENNIS/DENISE. The only thing we don't know is who the murderer is.

ANNIE. Oh, the tension in this house is...

Annie trips up 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.

Oh, the tension in this house is. Oh, the tension in thi... oh it... oh, it's tense.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Florence. How do you feel now?

ANNIE. (Ad-libs, brightly.) I'm good.

ROBERT/RACHEL. That's dreadful.

ANNIE. (Ad-libs.) Oh dreadful, yes, I want to die!

ROBERT/RACHEL. That's the spirit, Florence.

DENNIS/DENISE. But now, Miss Colleymoore, I must ask you an important question. Where were you when the murder was committed?

Dennis/Denise mimes the line to her. He/She points down and mimes drinking a cup of tea. Annie misinterprets.

ANNIE. On the floor with a moustache.

ROBERT/RACHEL. That makes perfect sense. So was I.

Annie reads off the wrong page of the script.

ANNIE. Kiss me a thousand times, I'm yours!

ROBERT/RACHEL. Of course, Florence, that's what brothers/sisters are for.

DENNIS/DENISE. This is a disaster! And already it's midnight.

Trevor/Taylor plays a loud clock chime twelve times.

That was most—

Trevor/Taylor hits the chime again. He/She sees he/she has confused Dennis/Denise and stops.

...that was most—

Trevor/Taylor hits the chime again and laughs to him/herself.

TREVOR/TAYLOR. (To Dennis/Denise.) Sorry, go on.

DENNIS/DENISE. That w—

Trevor/Taylor hits the chime again. Chris opens the study door.

CHRIS. Trevor/Taylor!

Chris closes the study door.

DENNIS/DENISE. That was most ominous. (Pronounced “omoo-noose.”)

ROBERT/RACHEL. Ominous indeed.

Chris enters from study, holding a gun.

CHRIS. Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore, I must speak with you privately.

ROBERT/RACHEL. At once, Inspector.

Other actors stay on even though they should have exited.

CHRIS. I must speak with you, Thomas/Mary.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Of course, Carter.

CHRIS. Are you sitting comfortably?

ROBERT/RACHEL. Most comfortably, Inspector.

CHRIS. Before we speak, I must check that no one else is in earshot.

ROBERT/RACHEL. No one else is here, Inspector.

Actors scatter, realizing they should have left.

CHRIS. Very well. Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore, I have found the weapon that was used to kill Cecil Haversham.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Good Lord, where was it?

CHRIS. In the library, lying on the table. Muzzle warm and the barrel still smoking.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Someone killed Cecil with this?

CHRIS. Yes, less than half an hour ago.

ROBERT/RACHEL. But who?

CHRIS. I was hoping you would be able to tell me that, Colley-moore/Miss Colleymoore. After all we are friends, aren't we?

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

There is a loud crash offstage, causing Robert/Rachel to forget his/her line.

Line!

TREVOR/TAYLOR. (On his/her way out of the tech box.) I don't know what page we're on!

ROBERT/RACHEL. I don't know what page we're on.

Robert/Rachel realises this isn't the line and looks to Trevor/Taylor furiously.

CHRIS. (Prompts Robert/Rachel.) Besides, why would I want to...

ROBERT/RACHEL. 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/woman, Colley-moore/Miss Colleymoore; ruthlessly protective of your sister.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Protective! I approve of whatever makes my sister happy.

CHRIS. Don't play the fool with me, Thomas/Mary. You shot Cecil Haversham in cold blood and you know that wasn't the plan. I must show you something, Thomas/Mary. No doubt you'll find it interesting.

Robert/Rachel tries to lean against the fireplace wall flat and the flat slips forward slightly.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Well... well... well... What is it, Inspector?

CHRIS. A new draft of Charles' last will and testament, dated only tod-ay!

Chris rushes to help Robert/Rachel stabilize the flat.

It appears he has changed the beneficiary.

Chris passes the will to Robert/Rachel, who cannot untie the ribbon.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Who on earth has he changed the benefic... well who...on earth has he changed the beni... Well who has he—

Robert/Rachel pretends to read off of the front of it.

Good Lord!

CHRIS. That's right!

ROBERT/RACHEL. He's leaving it all to Perkins!

CHRIS. The time has come to confront Perkins and tell him/her we know what he/she has done! Let's go find him/her!

ROBERT/RACHEL. Yes, Inspector.

They let go, thinking they have stabilized the fireplace wall; instead it comes crashing down. They exit through the space left by the wall flat. Dennis/Denise and Annie come running in to see the damage. There is a heavy knock at the door.

DENNIS/DENISE. Who the devil could that be?

ANNIE. (Searches through the pages.) Err...I don't know!

DENNIS/DENISE. You're probably right! Quickly, Miss Colley-moore, we must hide you out of harm's way. Charles had a secret passage built behind this bookcase. Stand back, I'll open it.

Dennis/Denise pulls a book down from the bookshelf. Nothing happens. Dennis/Denise looks at the bookcase. It turns and swallows Dennis/Denise up.

(Off.) Step inside, Miss Colleymoore.

Annie steps in front of the bookcase and it swivels again, swallowing her and spitting Dennis/Denise back out. Dennis/Denise goes around again. Annie follows around after him/her.

You're safe in there—

As Dennis/Denise reemerges, this time Trevor/Taylor is spat out after him/her. More knocking comes from the door. Trevor/Taylor goes to exit through the door, but hears more knocking, panics and hides in the grandfather clock.

You're safe in there, Miss Colleymoore.

Dennis/Denise opens the door. Thunder and lighting. Max stands in the doorway, dressed as a new character (Arthur the Gardener) in an overcoat, with mutton chops, a watering

can and holding a lead with no dog. Max gives the same performance he did as Cecil.

DENNIS/DENISE. Arthur the Gardener! What are you doing here?

MAX. I was gardening late this evening with Winston (*Holds up the lead.*) when we got caught in the storm and couldn't make it to the gates.

DENNIS/DENISE. Good heavens, Arthur, come inside. You won't believe what a nightmare this evening has been.

MAX. How do you mean? Woah Winston, down from the chaise longue!

He mimes holding down the invisible dog. Vamp. Max holds the imaginary dog back from going into the audience.

DENNIS/DENISE. Mr. Haversham was murdered tonight.

MAX. Mr. Haversham? Surely you don't mean Charles Haversham?

DENNIS/DENISE. And not only that, his brother Cecil was also killed tonight.

MAX. Yes, well that explains the strange goings-on I have seen in the grounds this evening.

DENNIS/DENISE. Strange goings-on?

MAX. A mysterious figure stood by the window to this very room and I noticed that the latch on the window was forced and Winston found this on the ground beneath it.

Max produces a handkerchief from his pocket and hits Dennis/Denise with it.

A lace handkerchief. With a deep red mark with a distinctive scent.

Dennis/Denise smells the handkerchief, then reads off his/her hand.

DENNIS/DENISE. Cyanide. (*Pronounced "ky-a-nid-ee."*)

MAX. Precisely! Cyanide.

Dennis/Denise becomes upset he/she has made yet another mistake and turns upstage to hide his/her emotion. Max briefly comforts Dennis/Denise and he/she turns back to the audience.

—and you can tell from the shape of the mark it's been used to hold a bottle.

Dennis/Denise reveals that a bottle has been crudely drawn onto the handkerchief.

But not only that, it's embroidered with the initials F.C.

DENNIS/DENISE. Florence Colleymoore.

MAX. Indeed.

DENNIS/DENISE. Arthur the Gardener, you're suggesting that Florence Colleymoore broke into Charles' private rooms this afternoon?

MAX. Florence has murdered her own fiancé!

DENNIS/DENISE. Miss Colleymoore, get in here now!

The bookcase spins around, revealing Annie holding a new script.

You killed Charles Haversham and we have the evidence to prove it.

ANNIE. (Grinning, knowing she now has the correct script.) How dare you, Perki...

Chris and Robert/Rachel enter through the s. r. door.

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! Woah Winston! Down boy!

Max mimes holding the dog back from Chris.

DENNIS/DENISE. Winston, the Inspector's here to help us.

MAX. I'm sorry about Winston, Inspector. I'll put him outside.

Max throws the lead out through the door.

CHRIS. Arthur, I presume?

MAX. I'm the longest-serving member of staff here at Haversham Manor.

DENNIS/DENISE. He's been working for Mr. Haversham for ninety years.

CHRIS. (Aside to Dennis/Denise.) Nine.

DENNIS/DENISE. Ninety-nine years.

CHRIS. Ninety-nine years? What a dedicated man.

Hearing this, Max hunches over and acts as though he is incredibly old. Chris continues his/her line through gritted teeth.

But Arthur, I was informed—

Chris turns and sees Max.

I was informed that you left Haversham Manor at six o'clock today?

MAX. (Old man voice.) What's that, young man?

Chris grabs Max and pulls him up to standing. Max reverts to his normal performance.

CHRIS. It would appear you were hiding in the grounds on the night two men were murdered here!

DENNIS/DENISE. Arthur became trapped in the storm and couldn't make it to the gates.

CHRIS. How implausible. I don't suppose you realise what you've walked into this evening then, Arthur?

MAX. On the contrary, Inspector. It appears I have discovered a clue that will close this case.

Max holds out the handkerchief, hitting Chris.

CHRIS. A handkerchief?

DENNIS/DENISE. Monogrammed. (Pronounced "mon-oh-gram-ed.")

CHRIS. Monogrammed.

MAX. And stained with cyanide. (Pronounced "ky-a-nid-ee.")

He looks at Dennis/Denise with approval.

CHRIS. Cyanide!

MAX. Dropped beneath the forced window that was used to gain access to this room so someone could poison Charles.

CHRIS. Good God, how dreadful! I must inspect this handkerchief in more detail. Thomas/Mary, fetch my magnifying glass from Charles' desk.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Without delay, Inspector.

Robert/Rachel goes to the s. l. table where it should be but can't find it; he/she goes to the bookcase and yells off for the magnifying glass. Robert/Rachel reaches in and gets arm stuck.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Your magnifying glass, Inspector.

Robert/Rachel grabs a book from the bookcase and throws it to Chris.

CHRIS. Thank you, Mary/Thomas.

DENNIS/DENISE. But Inspector, there is something you do not know about that handkerchief—

The telephone rings loudly.

MAX. I'll get it. (*Picks up receiver.*) Good evening? ...Ah yes. It's for you, Mr./Miss Colleymoore.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Who is it, Arthur?

MAX. Mr. Fitzroy, sir/ma'am.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Hand me the receiver, Arthur.

MAX. At once, sir/ma'am.

Max tries to pass Robert/Rachel the receiver, but the cord doesn't reach. Annie, Max and Chris create a chain of arms from the phone with Chris' hand in a phone shape at the end. When they are all at full stretch, Max releases the handkerchief to give them the extra few inches they need to get the receiver to Robert's/Rachel's ear.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Fitzroy! 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!

Max sneezes and drops the end of the handkerchief.

Hello? Fitzroy? Are you there?

Chris flicks the handkerchief and Max catches it again.

Ah, there you are, Fitzroy. 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 the phone immediately.

The phone is hung up.

DENNIS/DENISE. Mr./Miss Colleymoore, you look like you could use a scotch.

ROBERT/RACHEL. No! No more scotch thank you, Perkins. What a dreadful evening! I must check my bank records once more, if you'll excuse me...

Dennis/Denise helps free Robert/Rachel from the bookcase. Robert/Rachel tries to exit through the s. l. door, but it's stuck again. He/She struggles noisily with the door. Stagehands come in with power tools and make noise as well. The other actors shout to cover the noise Robert/Rachel and the stagehands are making.

DENNIS/DENISE. Inspector! There is something about the handkerchief you have not detected!

CHRIS. What is it, Perkins?

DENNIS/DENISE. That handkerchief bears upon it the initials F.C.

MAX. Florence Colleymoore is the murderer!

ANNIE. Inspector! Me? The murderer? How can you?

CHRIS. You are the murderer, Miss Colleymoore. 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. It seems plausible to me that you both murdered him so you could be together.

The s. l. door finally comes off! Stagehands take the door offstage.

ROBERT/RACHEL. If you'll excuse me.

Robert/Rachel exits through the s. r. door since s. l. is blocked by stagehands.

MAX. Florence Colleymoore is the murderer!

ANNIE. Inspector! Me, the murderer? How can yo—

ROBERT/RACHEL. I checked my bank recor...oh!!

Robert/Rachel enters sharply through the s. r. door, knocking Annie out.

CHRIS. You're lying, Florence, you killed him!

ROBERT/RACHEL. She's having another one of her hysterical episodes.

Robert/Rachel and Chris lift Annie's body up and sit her on the windowsill.

CHRIS. You killed your fiancé, Florence. What do you have to say for yourself?

Chris lifts Annie's face so she looks out to the audience.

SANDRA. (Off.) I am no murderer!

Sandra bursts in through the swivel bookcase in her under-wear/bathrobe. Chris and Robert/Rachel drop Annie backwards through the window.

CHRIS. We all know that's not true.

SANDRA. It is true, Inspector!

MAX. You've been exposed.

CHRIS. Very well, Miss Colleymoore, your name can easily be cleared. We must examine Charles' body for evidence of cyanide poisoning. Miss Colleymoore, Perkins, show me to the service quarters so I can check the deceased once more.

DENNIS/DENISE. Inspector.

CHRIS. Arthur, you stay here with Miss Colleymoore and ensure she does not leave this room.

Max protests about having to stay with an "indecent" Sandra. Chris, Robert/Rachel and Dennis/Denise exit through the door. Sandra and Max are alone again. Max stares at the floor; he cannot look at Sandra in her robe.

SANDRA. Arthur, you have known me for years, surely you believe I would never do something like this?

MAX. On the contrary, Miss Colleymoore, 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. Miss Colleymoore, you know I cannot resist your feminine charms.

SANDRA. I have seen the way you look at me across the grounds. Even now, the way you're looking at me.

Max stares away from her.

Even now, the way you're looking at me... Even now the way you're looking at me!

Sandra turns Max's head to look at her more forcefully.

I know how you feel.

MAX. Please, Miss Colleymoore, I am a simple gardener, I...

SANDRA. And you have said before how rad—

Sandra pulls her hand away from Max's face, accidentally tearing off one of Max's mutton chops. Max takes it back and tries to stick it back on, but it won't stick. Max swaps places with Sandra so his remaining chop is facing the audience. Little vamp here of Max grinning at the audience.

And you have said before—

Max holds the loose chop up so it looks like a moustache on his face.

And you have said before—

Max holds up the loose chop so it looks like a moustache on Sandra's face.

And you have said before how radiant I look as I walk across the gardens.

Sandra rips off mutton chop.

Oh Arthur, protect me. I'll be yours if you do.

Sandra grasps Max tightly.

MAX. Miss Colleymoore, I do not feel as you suggest. You are a murderer and a seductress and I shall not be seduced.

Max pushes Sandra away. Sandra lets out a squeal of frustration and bangs on the side of the clock. Trevor/Taylor is startled within the clock and opens the door, knocking Sandra out again.

Max and Trevor/Taylor look at one another. They lift her unconscious body into the clock. Having done this, they remember the audience is watching. Max looks at the script and to Trevor/Taylor. He gives Trevor/Taylor the script and gestures to present him/her to the audience. Trevor/Taylor reluctantly reads as Florence.

TREVOR/TAYLOR. (Reads.) But Arthur, how can you resist me? I'm a beautiful woman.

MAX. Stop, Miss Colleymoore. You are using your powers over men as you always have.

TREVOR/TAYLOR. (Reads.) You can't pretend your feelings aren't real.

MAX. Very well, perhaps it is true that I have admired you.

TREVOR/TAYLOR. (Reads.) Then kiss...ohh! Then kiss me Arthur. You know you want to.

Beat. Max approaches Trevor/Taylor. Trevor/Taylor breaks away.

Vamp. Sometimes audiences become very involved here. Max looks to them for their approval and is encouraged and runs over and kisses Trevor/Taylor (mouth wide open over his/hers as it was with Sandra earlier). Robert/Rachel, Chris and Dennis/Denise enter and see them. (If Trevor/Taylor is cast female, make it as awkward as possible, think two young actors doing their first stage kiss!)

ROBERT/RACHEL. What on earth is...

Silence.

What on earth is going on?

MAX. I can explain.

ROBERT/RACHEL. I don't think you can.

DENNIS/DENISE. Miss Colleymoore in Arthur's arms?

CHRIS. A second affair?

ROBERT/RACHEL. Florence, you've changed.

TREVOR/TAYLOR. (Reads.) Your wild accusations have driven me to this. I feel dizzy. I feel like I'm about to pass out!

CHRIS. I suggest you settle down, Miss Colleymoore.

DENNIS/DENISE. Quickly, where's her medication?

ROBERT/RACHEL. Blast, I must have left it in the study.

Robert/Rachel exits through the s. l. door.

CHRIS. Miss Colleymoore, you are a vile criminal.

DENNIS/DENISE. And to think we took you in!

MAX. You have manipulated me. I have let my master down tonight.

CHRIS. And all the while you were plotting your fiancé's demise!

TREVOR/TAYLOR. Oh Inspector! All these accusations, I feel an episode coming on.

Trevor/Taylor protests at having to do this.

CHRIS. (Snarling under his/her breath.) Have an episode.

Trevor/Taylor reluctantly begins to have an episode. He/She then starts to enjoy it, playing off the audience. He/She builds it until his/her episode becomes ridiculously large and invades Chris' personal space. Chris pushes him/her aside, and he/she trips, hitting the chaise longue and passing out behind it.

Settle down, Miss Colleymoore! An adulteress and a cold-blooded killer!

SANDRA. (Within the clock.) I'm not, Inspector!

All turn to face the clock. Sandra tries to get out. Chris tries to open the front, but she is stuck inside.

CHRIS. Yes you are, Miss Colleymoore!

SANDRA. (From within the clock.) Oh Inspector! I can't take it anymore, I shall faint.

Chris lowers the clock onto one side. Beat.

DENNIS/DENISE. She's fainted.

Dennis/Denise, Chris, and Max point to clock.

MAX. It's all become too much for her.

CHRIS. Quickly, lie her down on the chaise.

Beat. Max, Dennis/Denise and Chris lift the clock on the chaise longue. (If your actors need help carrying the clock, Chris can adlib about spirits in the house who can come help, and grab a stagehand backstage.)

That's better.

Robert/Rachel enters with a pillbox and a glass of water.

ROBERT/RACHEL. I found Florence's— (Sees the clock and freezes.) ...medication... what's happened?

CHRIS. Florence has fainted.

Chris, Max and Dennis/Denise all gesture to the clock in unison.

MAX. There, there, Miss Colleymoore.

Dennis/Denise, Max and Chris all stroke the clock.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Good Lord. I'll wake her up.

Robert/Rachel throws the glass of water onto the clock face.

She's out cold.

CHRIS. But Arthur, is this the same person you saw outside the window this evening?

MAX. I cannot tell, Inspector. Mr./Miss Colleymoore, please move her hands from her face.

Robert/Rachel slowly looks at the clock, then swiftly tears the hands off of the clock face and pockets them.

It was not her, Inspector. Besides, the figure I saw was that of a man.
(Cut last sentence if Dennis/Denise or Chris are cast female.)

Annie slowly stands up in the window.

CHRIS. Of course it was, you were taken in by a handkerchief planted outside the window to frame Florence. She and Cecil both have plausible motives for murder, but the true motive belongs to Perkins! (Cut "it was" if Dennis/Denise or Chris are cast female.)

Annie enters through the window, getting in between Chris and Dennis/Denise as Chris points to Dennis/Denise. Robert/Rachel and Dennis/Denise fix the problem.

To Perkins!

DENNIS/DENISE. Me, Inspector?

CHRIS. You, Perkins! It appears Charles made Perkins the sole beneficiary...

He/she produces the will. Annie picks up the script.

...of his inheritance.

DENNIS/DENISE. This is all a mistake.

CHRIS. Save your...

Annie climbs up on top of the clock to resume playing Florence. She flops down, pretending to be unconscious.

Save your pleading for the police station.

Chris throws a pair of handcuffs to Robert/Rachel, who cuffs Dennis/Denise to the chaise longue.

Thomas/Mary, handcuff him/her to the chaise longue lest he/she escape before I can drive him/her there.

MAX. That won't be for hours, the snow is at its peak.

A single weak handful of snow is thrown in the window.

DENNIS/DENISE. 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/RACHEL. You did faint, Florence. We've learned that Perkins committed the murder.

SANDRA. Perkins?

ANNIE. (Copying Sandra.) Perkins?

SANDRA and ANNIE. But he's/she's such a kindly old man/woman!

Sandra and Annie small vamp telling each other to get off stage. They both freeze in Florence's position s. l.

DENNIS/DENISE. This is all a misunderstanding! I didn't kill Charles, but I know who did.

ALL. WHO?

DENNIS/DENISE. INSPECTOR CARTER!

All gasp.

MAX. What on earth?

CHRIS. Poppycock!

DENNIS/DENISE. You did it because Charles knew about the police money you were (Checks hand.) embezzling. (Pronounced "em-beezeling.")

CHRIS. Nonsense!

DENNIS/DENISE. You say you'd met before; that he was a consultant on a fraud case you were working on.

CHRIS. What of it?

DENNIS/DENISE. Charles found the reason why no arrests had been made is because the man/person committing the crime was yourself. You were the (*Checks hand.*) facade. (*Pronounced "fucayde."* *Checks his/her other hand.*) The perpetrator. You were the perpetrator.

CHRIS. You can't prove it.

MAX. But Charley could and that's why you killed him.

CHRIS. Never!

DENNIS/DENISE. I know your secret, Inspector. What will you do? Kill me too?

Chris starts to draw a gun.

CHRIS. I will, confound it.

The gun gets caught in its holster; Chris points the gun in its holster.

SANDRA and ANNIE. What a devil of a situation this is!

Jonathan enters through the s. r. door, again holding his gun.

JONATHAN. Not so fast, Inspector!

All gasp.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Charles!

CHRIS. Haversham!

DENNIS/DENISE and MAX. Sir!

ANNIE. Charley! I—

SANDRA. (*Pushes in front.*) 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.

ANNIE. Charley—

Sandra stamps on Annie's foot. Sandra and Annie fight throughout the next lines.

SANDRA. Charley, this is all more than I can bear!

JONATHAN. Ever since we last spoke at the police station it was clear you thought I was on to you. It was at this point I became afraid you might try to kill me. For months now I've had my guard up and tonight you fell into my trap.

DENNIS/DENISE. 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 and ANNIE. I thought it was strange...

Annie pushes the bookcase, which swivels and swallows Sandra. Annie then blocks Sandra from coming back in.

ANNIE. *I thought it was strange you got here so quickly in such terrible weather!*

Sandra gives up on the bookcase and falls silent. Annie wanders over to the window, picking up a tray.

MAX. But what about the handkerchief bearing Florence Colley-moore's initials?

JONATHAN. Perhaps you should ask Inspector Carter, or should I say Inspector Frederick/Frances Carter.

ALL. F.C.

MAX. The same initials.

DENNIS/DENISE. Precisely, and after committing the crime you found Charles' will in his ledger and tried to pin the whole thing on me.

Sandra appears through the window.

SANDRA. You damned—

Annie hits Sandra with the tray. Sandra 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/RACHEL. Of course, Charles, I have the key.

Robert/Rachel goes to release Dennis/Denise, but he/she doesn't have the key. Robert/Rachel searches his/her pockets for the key. Dennis/Denise remains handcuffed to the chaise longue. Robert/Rachel and Max try to pull the handcuffs off.

Sandra is seen getting up behind the window and running to the door, but Annie gets there first and holds it shut.

JONATHAN. Drop the gun, Inspector.

SANDRA. (Entering, but Annie pushes the door shut on her.) Ay me!

ANNIE. Ay 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 my study. Fetch the papers, Perkins.

DENNIS/DENISE. Yes, sir.

Robert/Rachel, Dennis/Denise and Max all look up. Dennis/Denise is still handcuffed to the chaise longue. Dennis/Denise drags the chaise longue to the s. l. door and struggles to get it through the door; stagehands come on and help maneuver it if needed.

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 frightening me!

Sandra screams and bursts out of the window.

SANDRA. Please, Inspector, you're frightening me!

Annie is furious.

CHRIS. You ought to be frightened!

JONATHAN. Arthur, hold everyone in this room. I'll send a wire to the local police.

MAX. Yes, sir.

Jonathan hands Max his gun and exits through the door.

SANDRA and ANNIE. You monster! You tried to kill Charles and you killed Ce...

Annie charges at Sandra, but Sandra moves out of the way and Annie charges out through the window.

SANDRA. ...and you killed Cecil. How could you?!

Sandra stands back in front of the window, but Annie leans in and drags her out through it so she lands on her back on the floor behind. Annie then dives onto Sandra elbow first. We hear them continuing to fight behind the set.

CHRIS. Alright I admit it, I tried to kill Charles, but I couldn't have done it without the help of my accomplice.

MAX. Your accomplice?

Robert/Rachel rushes to the door and tries to get out.

CHRIS. That's right. Thomas/Mary Colleymoore!

Robert/Rachel arrives at the door.

ROBERT/RACHEL. It's true—

Max turns quickly, and the barrel of the gun flies off, narrowly missing Robert/Rachel.

It's true! I'm the Inspector's accomplice; I helped him/her move the money. But don't you think for one second I'm going down for this. Good God! Charley's locked the door.

The s. r. door comes off its hinges in Robert's/Rachel's hand.

We're trapped!

Robert/Rachel ditches the door offstage.

CHRIS. Quickly, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore! Head out the window!

MAX. Winston, get him/her boy!

Max throws the lead at Chris, who screams as if under attack by Winston.

CHRIS. Down, Winston!

Chris throws the lead out of the window.

Quickly, Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore, we can escape through the study.

Chris and Robert/Rachel go to the study, but Dennis/Denise has blocked the door with the chaise longue. Jonathan rushes on, and Chris and Robert/Rachel turn back into the room.

DENNIS/DENISE. The papers, sir.

Dennis/Denise throws the papers to Jonathan.

JONATHAN. Thank you, Perkins, now fetch my reading glasses from the library.

DENNIS/DENISE. Yes, sir.

Dennis/Denise and stagehands start pushing the chaise out through the study door, backing Robert/Rachel and Chris into the door flat; it falls with them in the opening.

CHRIS. It's useless Colleymoore/Miss Colleymoore, there's no way out.

Sandra runs back in.

SANDRA. Brother/Sister, I'm surprised at—

Annie appears in the window with the tray and hits Sandra over the head with it. Sandra passes out.

ANNIE. Brother/Sister, I'm surprised at you. I don't know what you've become!

Annie jumps in through the window and over Sandra.

ROBERT/RACHEL. I feel so ashamed. Carter and I found that between the two of 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 earlier on this evening...

Robert/Rachel forgets his/her line. Trevor/Taylor wakes up on the ground, looking badly injured. He/She staggers towards the door.

Line!

TREVOR/TAYLOR. This set's a death trap!

Trevor/Taylor shuffles off through the s. l. door opening.

ROBERT/RACHEL. This set's a death trap!

CHRIS. (Prompts Robert/Rachel.) As for Cecil!

ROBERT/RACHEL. 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/Mary Colleymoore and Inspector Carter made.

SANDRA and ANNIE. No this can't be true, I can't belie—

Sandra throws the vase at Annie. Annie ducks and the vase smashes against the back wall where clock was.

SANDRA. I can't believe it!

JONATHAN. Florence, your sordid affair made me sick. It broke my heart.

Annie and Sandra both try to get hold of Jonathan to continue the scene, pulling him to the floor in the process.

SANDRA and ANNIE. Charley! Look at me the way you used to look at me!

Vamp. Annie and Sandra each try to shout the line over the other. Robert/Rachel and Max try to pull them apart, but Annie takes Robert/Rachel out with a swift punch to the stomach. Sandra knees Max in the groin, sending him down as well. Dennis/Denise reappears in the doorway, holding Charles' reading glasses.

DENNIS/DENISE. (Over the shouting.) Your reading glasses, sir!

JONATHAN. (Over the shouting.) Thank you, Perkins!

Doorbell sounds.

Get the door, Perkins.

DENNIS/DENISE. Yes, sir!!

Dennis/Denise exits, still with the chaise longue in tow.

SANDRA. Charley!

JONATHAN. That will be the police to arrest you both.

Annie grabs Sandra and drags her to the window.

Silence, Florence, you mean 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! 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, appears in the window and stamps on Sandra before ducking out of sight. Max exits.

JONATHAN. But Thomas/Mary, Carter had you fooled, didn't he/she?

ROBERT/RACHEL. What do you mean?

JONATHAN. He/She never intended to share the money with you!
Let me summarize.

ANNIE. (*Through the window.*) I love you Charley!

Sandra pulls her down again.

JONATHAN. Inspector Carter knew I discovered you and he/she were both embezzling police money, so you hatched a plan to kill me, planting cyanide in my sherry for me to drink.

Sandra appears, holding Annie back.

SANDRA. I've still got the ring, Charley! We can make it work!

Annie slaps Sandra, who falls out of sight. Annie fetches the tray and starts hitting Sandra with it behind the window.

JONATHAN. Then mistakenly believing I was dead, Inspector Carter tried to pin my murder on my brother Cecil and Florence because of their affair. That is until your accomplice Thomas/Mary blundered in and shot my brother Cecil. Carter then tried to pin my murder on Perkins instead after finding my will in the ledger.

Annie appears, tearing a strip of industrial tape off of a roll.

ANNIE. **TAKE ME, CHARLEY! IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU!**

Sandra stands and tackles Annie. They both collapse and fall silent behind the window.

JONATHAN. Except what you didn't know, Thomas/Mary, was that Inspector Carter made a nine-thousand-pound withdrawal from your private accounts this morning and after framing someone for my murder he/she intended to flee with a one-way ticket to Dover, taking every penny with him/her! I think it's time to have a look inside your attaché case, Inspector, where we shall find...

Jonathan throws the case to Robert/Rachel, who opens it and produces a small green bottle.

The bottle of cyanide.

Robert/Rachel produces a bundle of banknotes.

Thomas/Mary Colleymoore's nine thousand pounds.

ROBERT/RACHEL. And of course, your one-way ticket to—

the whole door flat with the chaise longue. Sandra knocks the flat next to the window over trying to get tape off. Lastly, the window flat falls down as well (Max pushes it), leaving Annie standing in the window frame and revealing Max standing on a small stepladder, holding a bucket of snow. All stagehands are visible. Silence. Stillness. Max throws a handful of snow.

JONATHAN. Excellent. Perkins, if you could please escort Miss Colleymoore downstairs. I wish to have a word with Thomas/Mary in private.

DENNIS/DENISE. Yes, sir.

Dennis/Denise and Annie stay, trapped in by the fallen flats. Chris stares blankly at the devastation.

JONATHAN. (Whispers to Chris.) You're dead.

Chris remembers where he/she is, lets out a thin cry and drops down dead.

(To Annie.) Downstairs, Florence, downstairs.

Dennis/Denise, Annie and the rest of the cast and crew who can be seen pretend to walk downstairs on the spot where they are standing.

Thomas/Mary! You're not the man/woman I knew from school, you've become greedy and jealous.

ROBERT/RACHEL. (Traumatised.) I'm sorry, Charles, my nerves are in shreds.

JONATHAN. There's a glass of sherry by the telephone.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Thank you, Charles. Ever the kind host.

JONATHAN. Drink it up.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Most kind.

Robert/Rachel drinks the sherry.

JONATHAN. Tell me, Thomas/Mary, one last thing.

ROBERT/RACHEL. Anything, Charles. I'll 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/RACHEL. Well, I don't...know. What do you mean? You

don't mean you gave me... Charley? Charley, no! (Forgets his/her line.) Line!

TREVOR/TAYLOR. (From the tech box.) Just die!

ROBERT/RACHEL. Just die—how dare you!

Robert/Rachel dies. A large, flamboyant death that takes him/her quite a way away from the table. Just as he/she is almost finished, Robert/Rachel realises he/she is still holding the empty sherry glass and groans and crawls back in the other direction so he/she can put it down on the table. He/ She places down the glass and drops down dead. Max throws a handful of snow. Jonathan moves centre. The lights fade and a spot comes up on Jonathan.

JONATHAN. Oh how I wish this could have ended differently. Thomas/Mary, 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. Betrayed by my brother—

*A short burst of an English new wave song like "Rio" by Duran Duran plays, followed by a cycle of sound cues.**

TREVOR/TAYLOR. (Back in his/her box.) Oh come on!

Trevor/Taylor hits a button on his/her computer and the correct dramatic closing music plays.

JONATHAN. Cuckolded by my fiancée and almost murdered by my oldest friend.

He steps on Robert/Rachel's hand as payback for earlier.

Let us hope we never again see...

Robert/Rachel pulls Jonathan's pants down to get back at him; he's wearing some kind of funny boxers.

...a murder at Haversham Manor.

*Bows to an English new wave song like "Hungry Like the Wolf" by Duran Duran.***

End of Play

* See Note on Songs/Recordings at the back of this volume.

** See Note on Songs/Recordings at the back of this volume.

PROPERTY LIST

(Use this space to create props lists for your production)

SOUND EFFECTS

(Use this space to create sound effects lists for your production)

Dear reader,

Thank you for supporting playwrights by purchasing this acting edition! You may not know that Dramatists Play Service was founded, in 1936, by the Dramatists Guild and a number of prominent play agents to protect the rights and interests of playwrights. To this day, we are still a small company committed to our partnership with the Guild, and by proxy all playwrights, established and aspiring, working in the English language.

Because of our status as a small, independent publisher, we respectfully reiterate that this text may not be distributed or copied in any way, or uploaded to any file-sharing sites, including ones you might think are private. Photocopying or electronically distributing books means both DPS and the playwright are not paid for the work, and that ultimately hurts playwrights everywhere, as our profits are shared with the Guild.

We also hope you want to perform this play! Plays are wonderful to read, but even better when seen. If you are interested in performing or producing the play, please be aware that performance rights must be obtained through Dramatists Play Service. This is true for *any* public performance, even if no one is getting paid or admission is not being charged. Again, playwrights often make their sole living from performance royalties, so performing plays without paying the royalty is ultimately a loss for a real writer.

This acting edition is the **only approved text for performance**. There may be other editions of the play available for sale from other publishers, but DPS has worked closely with the playwright to ensure this published text reflects their desired text of all future productions. If you have purchased a revised edition (sometimes referred to as other types of editions, like “Broadway Edition,” or “[Year] Edition”), that is the only edition you may use for performance, unless explicitly stated in writing by Dramatists Play Service.

Finally, this script cannot be changed without written permission from Dramatists Play Service. If a production intends to change the

script in any way—including casting against the writer’s intentions for characters, removing or changing “bad” words, or making other cuts however small—without permission, they are breaking the law. And, perhaps more importantly, changing an artist’s work. Please don’t do that!

We are thrilled that this play has made it into your hands. We hope you love it as much as we do, and thank you for helping us keep the American theater alive and vital.

Note on Songs/Recordings, Images, or Other Production Design Elements

Be advised that Dramatists Play Service, Inc., neither holds the rights to nor grants permission to use any songs, recordings, images, or other design elements mentioned in the play. It is the responsibility of the producing theater/organization to obtain permission of the copyright owner(s) for any such use. Additional royalty fees may apply for the right to use copyrighted materials.

For any songs/recordings, images, or other design elements mentioned in the play, works in the public domain may be substituted. It is the producing theater/organization's responsibility to ensure the substituted work is indeed in the public domain. Dramatists Play Service, Inc., cannot advise as to whether or not a song/arrangement/recording, image, or other design element is in the public domain.

Additional Copyright Information

The right to recreate the West End and Broadway productions of THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG and/or to promote a production on the basis that it is a version of those productions is expressly reserved to the owners of the copyright and trademark-protected contributions to those productions and their advertising, specifically:

Directions © 2013 Mark Bell & Mischief Theatre Ltd.

Set Design © 2013 Nigel Hook

Lighting Design © 2013 Ric Mountjoy

Costume Design © 2013 Roberto Surace

Sound Design © 2013 Andy Johnson

Original Compositions © 2013 Rob Falconer

THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG

Falling G Logo ™ ® © 2013 Mischief Worldwide Ltd.

and any incorporation of material elements of such contributions in a production given under a Dramatists Play Service licence and without a separate licence to incorporate such contributions is a breach of this licence and of copyright law.

Advertising and promotion of a production given under this licence in a way which suggests to the public a connection with or that the production concerned is a version of the West End and/or Broadway production by incorporating the Falling G Logo or other material elements of those productions' publicity which may reasonably be expected to create this suggestion in the public mind is a breach of trade mark and/or other applicable law.

All such breaches are strictly forbidden.

If in doubt as to whether what you intend to do may be a breach of the above provisions, you must contact the Play Service before disseminating the doubtful matters to the public in advertising or production.

**Notice to Professional Licensees Interested in Presenting a
Version of the Tony® Award-winning Broadway and West End
Production of the Play**

Without prejudice to the above notice, the above rights and digital and physical resources to realise the contributions are available on a basis to suit a wide variety of production capabilities of professional licensees of the Play upon application to Mischief Worldwide Ltd. at www.MischiefComedy.com.