Good evening,
I'm Inspector Carter. Take my case.
This must be Charles Haversham.
I'm sorry, this must've given you all a damn shock.

After benefitting from a large and sudden inheritance, the inept and accident-prone Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society embark on producing an ambitious 1920s murder mystery. They are delighted that neither casting issues nor technical hitches currently stand in their way. However, disaster ensues and the cast start to crack under the pressure, but can they get the production back on track before the final curtain falls?

The Play That Goes Wrong is a hilarious, farcical murder mystery, a play-within-a-play, conceived and performed by award-winning company Mischief Theatre. It was first performed at the Old Red Lion Theatre, Islington before transferring to Trafalgar Studios in 2013. This edition features the updated, two-act script, developed for the production's tour and West End transfer to the Duchess Theatre in 2014.

'Immaculately staged . . . roused even a staid matinee audience to hysterics' The Times

'Genuinely hilarious . . . Boy, does it hit the funny bone' Daily Telegraph

'Reduced to tears of joy . . . I haven't laughed so much for years' Independent on Sunday

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Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer and Henry Shields
FROM AN ORIGINAL CONCEPT BY HENRY LEWIS

The Play That Goes Wrong
Version in two acts
Third edition

Bloomsbury Methuen Drama
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LONDON • NEW DELHI • NEW YORK • SYDNEY
The Play that Goes Wrong was first presented under the title The Murder Before Christmas on 4 December 2012 at the Old Red Lion Theatre in Angel, Islington, with the following cast:

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

The production then extended under its new title The Play that Goes Wrong, opening on 12 March 2013 at the same venue with the following cast changes:

Jonathan Henry Lewis
Robert Greg Tannahil
Sandra Lotti Maddox

The production then transferred to Trafalgar Studios, opening on 30 April 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 Tannahil

The Trafalgar Studios production was produced by Old Red Lion Theatre and Mischief Theatre with the following production team:

Director Mark Bell
Designer Henry Lewis
Lighting Designer Scott Pryce-Jones
Costume Designer Bryony Myers
Stage Manager Thomas Platt
General Manager Nicholas Thompson
The production transferred to the Duchess Theatre in London’s West End with the following cast and creative team:

**Trevor** Rob Falconer  
**Chris** Henry Shields  
**Jonathan** Greg Tannahill  
**Robert** Henry Lewis  
**Dennis** Jonathan Sayer  
**Sandra** Charlie Russell  
**Max** Dave Hearn  
**Annie** Nancy Wallinger  
**Jill** Alys Metcalf  
**Phil** Leonard Cook

*Male understudy* Leonard Cook  
*Female understudy* Alys Metcalf

**Director** Mark Bell  
**Set Designer** Nigel Hook  
**Lighting Designer** Ric Mountjoy  
**Costume Designer** Roberto Surace  
**Original Music** Rob Falconer

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**The Play That Goes Wrong**
Production Notes

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

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

A forward slash (/) denotes the next line beginning midway at this point in the current line.

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

The pre-show and interval activity should be subtle, incidental and never draw the full attention of the audience.

If possible Trevor should be visible throughout the show in a ‘technical area’ where he is supposedly operating the show. He should not, however, dominate the scene at any point as his presence, while important, must be incidental to the main action. It is best if he is positioned in the auditorium in a box or at the back of the stalls and not on the stage.
Characters
in order of appearance

Annie, the company's stage manager, Lancashire accent
Stage Crew, the Cornley Polytechnic stage crew
Trevor, the company's lighting and sound operator
Chris, head of the drama society, director of the play and plays 'Inspector Carter'
Jonathan, plays 'Charles Haversham'
Robert, plays 'Thomas Colleymoore'
Dennis, plays 'Perkins'
Max, plays 'Cecil Haversham' and 'Arthur'
Sandra, plays 'Florence Colleymoore'

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

Characters in the murder mystery play
Charles Haversham, deceased
Thomas Colleymoore, Charles' old school friend
Perkins, Charles' butler
Cecil Haversham, Charles' brother
Florence Colleymoore, Charles' fiancée and Thomas' sister
Inspector Carter, an esteemed local inspector
Arthur, the gardener at Haversham Manor

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

Act One

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

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

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

Pre-show activity As the audience enter, Annie (the Stage Manager) kneels by the fireplace trying to attach a mantelpiece to it. She realises she can't hold it and nail it at the same time. She fetches an audience member to hold it in position and continues to try and nail it on. She disappears around the back of the flats to fetch something, leaving the audience member standing there with the mantelpiece. The audience member hears voices from behind the flat - Annie saying 'Mind your fingers, drill bit coming through', Trevor saying 'Have you used that before?'; Annie saying 'No'. A drilling noise is heard from behind the flat. Then silence. Annie eventually reappears and the audience member is sent back to their seat. The mantelpiece is still not attached.
Two members of Stage Crew search the stalls and circle for a missing Duran Duran CD with torches. Trevor stands in the stalls; on his radio he tells two members of the audience that they are sitting beneath a faulty stage light. House music drops to a lower level and the house lights dim.

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

House lights go fully out. Silence.

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

Chris  Trevor! Trevor!

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

Chris  Leave it. Just leave it.

Annie  We need it . . .

Chris  We haven't got time.

Annie  hurries off behind the flat, taking the mantepliece and tools with her. Spotlight comes up and cuts off Chris' head.

Chris  Good evening, ladies . . .

He steps into it.

. . . and gentlemen and welcome to the Cornley Polytechnic Society's spring production of The Murder at Haversham Manor. I would like to personally welcome you to what will be my directorial debut, and my first production as head of the drama society.

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

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 we had to in last year's presentation of Roald Dahl's classic, James and the Peach. Of course, during the run of that particular show the peach went off, and we were forced to present a hastily devised alternative entitled James! Where's your Peach?

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

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

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

Jonathan (playing Charles Haversham) enters through the darkness. He trips and falls over. The lights suddenly come up on Jonathan on the floor. He freezes. The lights go out again as he takes up his position, dead, on the chaise longue, arm outstretched on to the floor. The lights come up again just before he's fully in position. Robert (playing Thomas Colleymoore) and Dennis (playing Perkins the Butler) can be heard off, approaching the downstairs door.

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

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

**Dennis** (off) Here they are, Mr Colleymoore.

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

*He tries to open the door, but it won't budge.*

(Off.) There we are. We're in.

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

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

**Dennis** Asleep surely, Mr Colleymoore?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Robert** At once, Perkins, and quickly.

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

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

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

**Dennis** (into the voice-pipe, echoing) Lounge to dining room! Cecil! Miss Colleymoore! Come to Charles' private rooms at once. Charles Haversham has been murdered.

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

*He hangs his jacket up on a hook on the wall. The hook and his jacket falls to the floor.*

... Or do you think perhaps it was suicide?

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

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

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

Dennis Shall I telephone the police, sir?

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

Opens the curtains to reveal falling paper snowflakes. Closes the curtains again.

I'll telephone Inspector Carter, he lives just the other side of the village. (Picks up receiver) He'll be here in next to no time. Hand me the receiver, Perkins.

He realises he already has the receiver.

Thank you, Perkins.

Dennis sits on Jonathan's leg.

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

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

Robert That's right!

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

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

Dennis Inspector Carter?

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

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

Robert Lock every door, man!

He crosses the stage again. Dennis follows. Jonathan sharply moves his hand out of the way of Robert's foot. Once Robert has passed Jonathan replaces his hand. Dennis treads on it.

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

Dennis At once, sir.

Robert And assemble everyone in here.

Dennis Right away, sir!

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

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

Sandra tries to get through the door.

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

She appears in the window, holding apart the curtains.

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

Robert No, don't touch him, Florence!

Sandra I must!

Robert You mustn't!

Sandra Unhand me, you controlling brute!

Robert pretends to release Sandra's hand.

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

Dennis This way, Master Haversham!

Max (off) I'm coming, Miss Colleymore!

The door suddenly bursts open revealing Max, Trevor, Annie and two members of Stage Crew who have all been attempting to open it. They all quickly run off. Seeing this, Sandra follows Max in.

Max Brother? Dead! It can't be!

Robert Calm yourself, Cecil. Pour him a stiff drink, Perkins.
Dennis Right away, sir! Charles always kept scotch upstairs in his study.

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

Max My brother had the finest collection of scotch in the county.

Robert Don’t you think I know that? He was my best friend.

Max Well, he was my brother, Thomas.

Robert Hang it all, Charley dead.

Sandra I can’t bear it.

Robert You aren’t to leave my sight this evening, Florence.

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

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

Robert (into the voice-pipe) Hang it all, there . . .

Dennis realises and tries to get rid of the scotch, pouring it out into the voice-pipe. The scotch spurts out of Robert’s end of the voice-pipe all over him. He quickly grabs the coal scuttle and catches the liquid inside.

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

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

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

Dennis Yes, this one’s full.

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

Dennis puts it the bottle to a tray along with four glasses. Dennis descends in the elevator and walks past the window. As he passes the window, Annie leans through and exchanges the empty bottle for a full plastic bottle of white spirit, with a large flammable symbol on it. He doesn’t see the switch.

Dennis I can’t imagine!

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

Robert As am I, Cecil! As am I!

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

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

Max Florence! Don’t lose your head!

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

Max I feel I shall pass out, Thomas!

Robert Perkins! Pour that man a stiff drink!

Dennis hands a glass to Max.

Max Thank you, Perkins.

Dennis pours the ‘scotch’ into Max’s glass. Sandra becomes calmer.

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

Sandra It’s terrible! Just a week after our engagement!

Max He was a good brother.

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

That’s the best scotch I’ve ever tasted.

Robert Have another, to calm your nerves.

Max Make it a double!

Dennis pours another glass of white spirit. Max drinks it again. He spits it out again.

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

Max Clam down, Florence.

Dennis Another scotch, sir?
Max Yes!
Sandra I can’t believe Charles was sat in here alone, drinking, when he was supposed to be downstairs with us.
Max My brother wasn’t as happy as he led people to believe. Underneath that cheerful mask lay a darker side to the man that many didn’t know about.
Dennis It’s true, his smile was often just a [Reads from his hand:] facade. I was fortunate enough to be one of the only people he truly confided in. I’ve lost a real friend today.
Robert We all have, Perkins. Hang it all, I knew Charlie ever since school.
Sandra I don’t know how I’ll ever recover from this.
Robert You’ll move back home with me. I’m your brother and I’ll have it no other way.
Max Perkins is right, my brother was hiding a deep sense of melancholy and resentment. There’s no doubt in my mind; it was suicide.
Dennis Suicide, Mr Haversham? How can you say that! Of course not; it’s murder! Murder in the first degree!
Max Nonsense, the man was paranoid, jealous, and I can prove it! Perkins, hand me his journal from the mantelpiece!
Annie’s hand reaches through the door and holds the journal in position above the fireplace. Dennis passes it to Max.
Max Why, look at the last entry. [Not looking at the journal.] ‘I fear Florence does not love me. The night of our engagement party; despair engulfs my soul.’
Sandra But I love Charles with all my heart!
Dennis takes the journal and returns it to the mantelpiece; it falls straight to the floor. Annie’s hand reaches through the window to try and catch it but she misses.
Max As I said! Driven mad with paranoia and jealousy.

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

All (react) The inspector!
Sandra Thank heavens he’s here!
Chris (playing ‘Inspector Carter’) enters through the door, covered in paper snowflakes, carrying an attaché case.
Chris What a terrible snowstorm. Good evening, I’m Inspector Carter. Take my case.
Dennis Yes, Inspector.
Chris hands his case to Dennis, who places it on the floor by the table.
Chris This must be Charles Haversham! I’m sorry; this must’ve given you all a damn shock.
Sandra It did, we’re all still reeling.
Chris Naturally. Are any of you the deceased’s immediate family?
Max I’m Cecil Haversham. I’m his brother.
Sandra (smiling) I’m Florence Colleymoore. I’m his fiancé. Tonight was our engagement party.
Chris What a damn sad thing. I take it everyone is assembled in here?
Robert Yes. The only other member of staff is Arthur the gardener. I saw him and Winston leaving for the weekend, hours ago.
Chris Winston?
Robert His guard dog.
Chris I see. Very well. You! Have you poured everyone a stiff drink?
Dennis Yes, Inspector.
He holds out the tray and they all take a glass. **Dennis** removes the tray, knocking **Jonathan** on the head.

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

**All**  Charles!

They all drink the white spirit. They gag, spit it out and recover. **Max** holds the white spirit in his mouth.

**Chris**  Delicious.

**Sandra**  Excellent.

**Robert**  Lovely. That’s a damn fine bottle, Perkins, what’s the vintage?

**Dennis** (reads the label)  Flammable and corrosive, sir.

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

**Max** spits out his white spirit. **Chris** deposits his notebook on the table.

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

**Dennis**  Yes, Inspector.

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

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

**Dennis**  Inspector.

Over the next few lines **Dennis** brings in a stretcher, **Robert** and **Dennis** lay the stretcher on the floor in front of the chaise lounge and they then try to lift **Jonathan** up but can’t. They roll him off the chaise lounge on to the floor.

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

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

**Sandra**  How could someone do it?

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

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

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

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

He exits, shutting the door behind him. **Jonathan** realises that he is meant to have been carried off and slowly starts to get up, trying not to be seen and exits towards the door, dragging the stretcher canvas with him.

**Sandra** and **Max** stare at **Jonathan** as he slowly leaves through the door and shuts it behind him.

**Max**  Thank God they’ve gone!

**Robert** and **Dennis** enter through the upstairs door, carrying a mimed body.

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

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

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

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

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

**Dennis**  This is most – (Checks hand.) morose.

**Robert**  Morose indeed.

Lights shift to downstairs.
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  You and I are having an affair, so what? It doesn't mean we killed him.

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

Max  It's fine, we'll just carry on as if everything's just as it was. He sits on the chaise longue and discovers a ledger under the cushions. In confusion he moves it under the chaise longue.

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

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

Max crosses to stage left.

Max  But now, with my brother out of the picture, I must ask you one question. He goes down on one knee. Lights shift to upstairs.

Dennis  It's so strange to think of Charles being dead.

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

Dennis  He was such an influence on all our lives.

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

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

He sees Jonathan and jumps a little.

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

Dennis  Of course, Inspector.

---

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

Chris  Check his pockets, Thomas.

Robert  Inspector.

He searches Jonathan's pockets but cannot find the prop he is supposed to find. After a few moments, Jonathan reaches into his inside jacket pocket and produces a letter and passes it to Robert.

Robert (ad lib)  Thank you, Charles.

Chris  And now to dust the body for fingerprints.

Robert  What was that?

Dennis  Sir?

Robert  I could have sworn I just saw him breathing.

Dennis  Breathing, si-

He drops the tin of powder. It covers Jonathan's face, causing him to cough loudly.

Chris  Nonsense, Colleymoore! This man is dead!

Lights shift to downstairs. Jonathan continues to cough.

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

Jonathan coughs again more violently and slips off the edge of the upper level and grabs hold of the edge of the floor. Robert, Dennis and Chris try to pull him back up but Jonathan then loses his grip and drops down to the lower level, landing between Max and Sandra.

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

Jonathan slowly gets up, retrieves the canvas and moves back out towards the door. He goes and closes the door, shutting the stretcher canvas in it. He pulls the canvas through the crack in the door, but the last bit gets stuck; he tugs at it, causing the door to swing open, revealing him.

Sandra closes the door.

Max  Charles is gone and he's never coming back.
Lights shift to upstairs.

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

Dennis Of course, Inspector.

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

Chris Check all of the doors are locked, Perkins.

Dennis Inspector.

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

Robert Naturally.

Jonathan re-enters, sees them and exits again.

Robert (ad lib) After you, Charles.

Robert and Dennis exit. The lights shift to downstairs.

Sandra Very well, I shall marry you.

Max Florence! Come into my arms.

Sandra I shall!

Max One embrace!

Sandra Oh Cecil! I love . . .

Robert bursts in.

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

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

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

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

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

Sandra He is my brother!

Max Let me kiss you! Just once!

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

Dennis bursts in.

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

Max Thank you, Perkins, they’re by the telephone.

Dennis sees the keys gone and instead picks up the Inspector’s notebook.

Dennis I shall lock the doors at once.

He exits with the Inspector’s notebook.

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

Max That old fool, of course not.

Sandra Oh, enough words! Take me!

Robert bursts in.

Robert I forgot the Inspector’s notebook . . . What in God’s name . . . !

Sandra I was about to faint! Cecil caught me!

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

He sees the notebook has gone. He takes the vase instead and exits.

Max Blasted interruptions!

Sandra Kiss me, Cecil!

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

Sandra Your eyes send me into a dream! Kiss me, Cecil, I can’t wait a second longer!
Pause. **Dennis** is supposed to have burst in. They look at the door.

Vamp. Eventually **Max** kisses **Sandra** intensely. Just then **Dennis** bursts in late, holding two candlesticks.

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

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

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

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

**Annie** continues to stare awkwardly from the fireplace.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Jonathan** Not so fast, Inspector!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Chris** opens the door.

**Chris** I'm sorry to have kept you . . .

The heraldic shield swings down and hits **Chris** in the face. He hastily re-hangs it.

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

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

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

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

**Dennis** As you wish, Inspector.

**Chris** realises what he's said. **Dennis** carries the props over to **Annie**, who is still holding the mantelpiece. **Dennis** hands her the items carefully. **Annie** struggles under the weight of the mantelpiece throughout the next exchange. Silence. **Dennis** is supposed to leave but doesn't.

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

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

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

**Max** Naturally.

**Max** and **Sandra** exit.

**Chris** Don't just stand there, Perkins. Take a seat.
Dennis remains sitting. He takes out a cigarette case.

Dennis May I?

Chris Go ahead. How are you feeling, Perkins?

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

He goes to light himself a cigarette, but burns his hand and drops the match into the coal scuttle, where it ignites the 'scotch'. Annie is alarmed by the fire and drops all of the props loudly on to the floor. Terrified, she rushes off into the wings.

Chris You were close with Charles Haversham?

Dennis Yes, sir, very close.

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

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

Chris It's true.

Dennis You met him?

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

Robert runs out from behind the flats with a fire extinguisher and puts out the fire. He realises he's been seen.

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

He withdraws, carrying the coal scuttle with him.

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

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

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

Dennis I see.

Chris How long have you been working at Haversham Manor?

Dennis Eighty years.

Chris Eighty / years?

Dennis (corrects himself) Eight years.

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

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

Chris Exits.

Dennis Exits!

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

Sandra bursts in, followed by Robert. Dennis exits.

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

Chris At last, Colleymoore. You found me a pencil?

Robert Yes, Inspector.

Hands Chris the keys.

Chris And my notebook?

Robert hands Chris the vase.

Chris I knew I'd left them somewhere. Now I must to speak to your sister alone.

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

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

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 Colleymore?
Sandra    Twenty-one.
Chris    I’ll make a note of that. *(Tries to make a note on the vase.)*
When were you and your fiancé due to be married?
Sandra    In the new year.
Chris    writes on vase again.
Chris    When did you first meet?
Sandra    Only seven months ago, but my brother has known
him since school. He introduced us at a local gala and it was
love at first sight. I knew from the very first moment I saw him
that he was the man I wished to marry.
Chris    Well, I think that’s enough note-taking for now.
Sandra    comes in a line too early.
Sandra    When you love someone there’s no such thing as
rushing, Inspector.
Chris    Did you ever think you were rushing into this
marriage?
Sandra    Why wouldn’t I love him?
Chris    Did you love him, then?
Sandra    How could anyone have benefited?
Chris    Can you think of anyone who might have . . .
beneﬁted from your fiancé’s death?
Sandra    Cecil?!
Chris    Not even Cecil?
Sandra    I wasn’t having an affair! Don’t raise your voice to
me, Inspector!
Chris    YOU WERE HAVING AN AFFAIR!
Sandra *(slaps Chris)*    Don’t tell me to calm down!
Chris    Calm down, Miss Colleymoore. *(Reacts to slap.)*

Sandra    Which letter?
Chris    Then how do you explain this letter?
Annie    has taken the letter off and she passes it back through the
fireplace.
Sandra    You’ve read my letter? Where did you find it?
Chris    I’ll tell you which letter! The one addressed to Cecil,
written in your hand, declaring your love for him and how the
thought of marrying Charles repulsed you.
Sandra    Charles read it . . .
Chris *(does Sandra’s line for her, high voice)*    You’ve read my
letter? Where did you find it? *(Back to his normal voice)* I’ll tell
you where I found it! In Charles’ pocket!
Sandra    Charles read it?! Then it was suicide.
Chris    Indeed! Or a murder, conceived by yourself and
Cecil Haversham so you could run away together.
Sandra    You diabolical beast. How can you? I won’t stand
for this, Inspector. Accuse me again and you’ll be sor –
Robert    bursts in followed by Max. The door hits Sandra sharply
on the head and she collapses, unconscious.
Robert    What’s all this shouting?
Max    What is this, Inspector?
*All register that Sandra is on the floor.*
Chris    I’m merely interviewing Miss Colleymoore, nothing
more.
Max    Florence, calm down, stop shouting!
Sandra    remains unconscious.
Robert    She’s having one of her episodes. Snap out of it,
you’re hysterical!
Sandra    remains unconscious.
Max: Florence! Where are you going?

Sandra remains unconscious.

Robert: Come back here this instant!

Sandra remains unconscious.

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

He exits.

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

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

The clock says 5:30.

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

Robert: Peers through the curtains to see if Sandra is alright.

Chris: Oh yes, Mr Haversham, similar questions to those I asked Miss 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. Since father died there was rather more strain on our relationship. It was no secret our father cared for Charles more than myself.

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

It's the painting of a dog

Max: It is.

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

Max: He did ever since he was quite young.

Chris: You were the junior by four years?

Max: Almost four, yes . . .

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Max: Inspector?

Chris: You can barely even make out the trees.

Max: What are you saying, Inspector?

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

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

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

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

Robert, Annie and Jonathan drop Sandra and start again.

Max: What on earth gave you that idea?
Chris The letter I found in Charles’ pocket from Miss Colleymoore to yourself.

Max (shaken) You know about that?

Chris As, it seems, did Charles.

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

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

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

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

He exits, catching his arm in the door.

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

He sits on the chaise longue.

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

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


He tries to take the ribbon off the document, but can’t. He reads from the closed document.

‘I, Charles Haversham, hereby amend my last will and testament to leave my money, Haversham Manor and all its contents and grounds to one . . .’ Good Lord!

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

Max Thomas Colleymoore for you, Inspector.

Chris Ah, thank you, Cecil. But before I question you, Mr Colleymoore, I do need to review some documents in Charles’ study. I’ll return presently.

Max Take your time, Inspector.

Robert Indeed.

Max Tell me, Thomas, did you find . . .

Chris gets into the elevator carriage and closes the doors. A dreadful clanking is heard. The upstairs doors open but Chris is only halfway up to the upper level. He indignantly climbs out on to the upper level. He slides the ledger forward out of his way but it goes too far and slips off the edge of the upper level. Robert catches it and throws it back up to Chris.

Max Tell me, Thomas, did you find Florence?

Robert She ran out into the grounds.

The voice-pipe funnel falls off the wall. Robert picks up the funnel and puts it back on the wall, knocking the barometer off.

Max And what were your feelings about Charles and Florence’s engagement?
Max picks up the barometer and puts it back on the wall, causing the painting of the dog to fall down. Max goes to hold up the painting, leaving the barometer to Robert. They are left holding up all three items.

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

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

The telephone rings.

I'll get it.

He tries hard to keep holding the picture against the wall while reaching for the phone, which keeps ringing. Finally he tries to hook it with his foot. The receiver falls off the telephone and further away on the floor.

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

Robert Who the devil is it?

Max Your accountants, Colleymoore.

Robert At eleven-thirty in the evening?

Max Yes.

Robert 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 remaining hand. He stretches and passes it to Robert, who eventually gets it, keeping the voice-pipe and barometer on the wall using his head.


Dennis enters through the door as far as he can.

Dennis Yes, sir.

Robert Perkins, fetch me my bank book.

Dennis passes Robert the bank book.

Dennis Your bank book, sir.

He puts the bank book into Robert's mouth.

Robert Thank you, Perkins.

Dennis Your pen, sir.

He passes a pen through the door and puts this in Robert's mouth as well.

Robert Thank you, Perkins.

He rearranges himself to take the phone again.

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

He writes the name in his bank book with a lot of difficulty.

Mr . . . Fi . . . tz . . . roy. 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, you find out who did and call back.

He throws the phone to Max, who hangs it up.

Max What is it, Colleymoore?

Robert Nine thousand pounds taken from my private savings. What a ghastly evening.

Max Thomas, I have a confession to make.

Robert Mm?

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

Robert WHAT?!

He launches himself at Max, who dives downstage. The dog picture, funnel and barometer mysteriously all stay hanging in their positions.

Robert and Max double-take.

Robert You and my sister?!
He throws Max downstairs left.

Max Now, calm down, Colleymoore.

Robert You always were a snake in the grass, Cecil.

He pulls Max up by his hair and drags him across the room, accidentally slamming him into the side of the clock. Robert draws a sword from the fireplace.

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

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

Max Don't speak about my father, Colleymoore!

He draws a sword.

Robert The time has come for you to answer to me for your indiscretions. Draw your sw — En garde!

They fight.

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. Max leaps off the back of the chaise longue.

Max I always was too quick for you, but nice try, Colleymoore.

A floorboard flips up and hits him in the face. He stumbles forward and trips, breaking his sword. He holds up the broken sword and makes sword-clanging sound effects as they continue fighting. Max beats Robert to the floor stage left below the upper level.

Max You've got a good parry, Colleymoore!

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

He accidentally thrusts his sword through the underside of the upper level. The blade comes up between Chris' legs. Robert tries to pull his sword back but finds it stuck. Both try to continue the fight without their swords. Max tears a section off the front of his jumper to reveal a red slash of fabric blood across his chest.

Robert I don't need this to kill a man like you! It seems there's no doubt about who killed Charles any more. He was killed by his own vile little brother in a fit of jealous rage. You'll be sorry you ever laid a finger on my sister, Haversham. You'll be sorry!

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

Dennis Gunshots in the library!

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

Dennis looks for the other end of the voice-pipe downstairs but can't find it. He picks up the barometer and speaks into it.

Dennis I don't know, Inspector; I heard screams and gunshots from downstairs! Please come down here!

Chris (into the pipe) I'm on my way, Perkins.

He gets in the elevator, and it begins to descend. Robert enters through the downstairs door.

Robert Inspector! Inspector! Where's Inspector Carter?

Dennis He's coming down now.

We hear the elevator crash to the floor. Chris bursts out in a cloud of smoke.

Robert 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 Indeed.
Chris It is important we remain calm, and we don’t let each other out of our sight. Where’s Miss Colleymoore?

Robert She’s coming now! Get in here, Florence!

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

Robert Florence, you don’t look yourself this evening.

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

Robert Don’t worry, Florence; you’re safe in here with me.

Dennis What is going on?

Chris Isn’t it obvious! Cecil has lost control!

Annie Cecil! Surely not!

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

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

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

Annie Save me, brother, save me!

She clings on to Chris, who pushes her towards Robert.

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

Annie I’m panicking! I can’t believe . . . Cecil?

Chris Cecil!

Annie Cecil . . . is doing this.

Dennis Try to stay calm, Miss Colleymoore!

Annie I shall faint!

She falls back without warning. Robert just catches her.

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

Jonathan bursts in again, holding his gun.

Jonathan Not so fast, Insp - !

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

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

Chris peels out of the door.

Chris Take cover!

Robert Great Scott!

Dennis Good heavens!

Annie Aye, me!

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

Robert Where are the keys to the door, Perkins?

Dennis Here they are, sir!

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

Dennis Here they are, sir!

Chris Quickly, Perkins, hand them to me before Cecil-

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

Chris Good Lord!

Short musical spike plays.

Annie Cecil’s dead?

The same short musical spike plays.
Dennis  A double murder!

A short burst of 'Girls on Film' by Duran Duran plays. Then suddenly the correct musical spike cuts in.

Trevor  Found the Duran Duran, carry on.

Chris (check's Max's pulse)  Time of death: quarter to mid – five o'clock.

He checks the clock. It still reads 5:30.

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

Silence. Chris turns the page in her script.

Annie  I was his.

Dennis  There there, Miss Colleymoore.

Annie  How will I go on? Sobs.

Chris  You! Take this body outside.

Dennis  Yes, sir.

Robert  I'll lend you a hand, Perkins.

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

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

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

Chris  Remember your breathing, Miss Colleymoore, now is not the time for another of your episodes.
Robert  The gardener left at six, the only other member of staff is Perkins. *(Drinks and spits out the white spirit.*) Good God, I needed that.

Chris  Does anyone else have access to the grounds?

Annie  No one, Inspector.

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

Robert  Then who could have killed him?

*The script begins to go round in a loop.*

Dennis  That’s a good question, Mr Colleymoore –

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

Annie  Inspector, you’ve given me a chill!

Chirs  Perkins, pour us all another scotch.

Dennis  Of course, Inspector.

*He pours white spirit again.*

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

Annie  Not a soul.

Robert  The 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  I’m the only one with the master key and as instructed I locked and bolted the doors as soon as you arrived.

Robert  Then who could have killed him?

*The script loops again.*

Dennis  That’s a good question, Mr Colleymoore –

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

Annie  Inspector, you’ve given me a chill!

Chirs  Perkins, pour us all another scotch.

Dennis  Of course, Inspector.

*He pours white spirit again.*

Chris  Now, tell me is there anyone else that you know of in the grounds other than the four of us?
The Play That Goes Wrong

Annie  Not a soul.

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

Robert  Then who could have killed him?

Dennis  That's a good question, Mr Colleymoore --

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

Annie  Inspector, you've given me a chill!

Chris  Perkins, pour us all another scotch.

Dennis  Of course, Inspector.

He pours white spirit again.

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

Annie  Not a soul.

Robert  The gardener left at six, the only other member of staff is Perkins. *(Throws the white spirit over Dennis.*) Good God, I needed that!

Chris  Does anyone have access to the grounds?

Annie  No one, Inspector.

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

All  Then who could have killed him?

Dennis *(realises)*  No one could have killed them, except the people in this room. *YES!*  

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

*All gasp.*

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

She realises her mistake.

Oh.


End of Act One

INTERVAL ACTIVITY  A few minutes into the interval the safety curtain begins to come down, it stops a foot or two from the floor.

Trevor enters and quietly pushes it down.

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

Dramatic house music plays.

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

**Chris**  Good evening again, ladies and gentlemen, I hope you have enjoyed the break, we will be resuming this evening’s performance in just a couple of moments I am assured. I must say I’m delighted to see that so many of you have returned for the second half.

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

Last year our production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* got off to a shaky start when we didn’t realise that our set designer suffered from colour blindness. Anyway, before we begin again, one word of . . .

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

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

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

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

**Chris**  Before we resume the production one word of health and safety administration; can I please ask anyone who consumed one of the raspberry-ripple flavoured ice creams available during the interval to please seek medical help immediately.

And now, without further ado, please put your hands together for the concluding act of *The Murder at Havershaw Manor*.

---

*He exits.*

Introduction music plays and the tabs fly out, revealing **Annie, Max, Robert, Dennis, Jonathan** and the **Stage Crew** all re-hanging the picture, voice-pipe funnels, barometer, curtains etc. on the walls. They see the audience. **Chris** enters, from the wings outraged. The house tabs stop and fly back in. Beat. The house tabs fly back out, revealing **Robert, Dennis, Chris** and **Annie** in their positions from the end of *Act One*. **Jonathan** and **Max** have gone. All wall hangings are back in position. Beat.

**Dennis**  No one . . .

All wall hangings crash down to the floor.

No one could have killed them, except for the people in this room.

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

All gasp.

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

**Robert**  And it’s not over yet! Two murders on one night at Havershaw Manor, what a grizzly evening.

**Annie**  Frightful, brother, frightful.

**Dennis**  And look, Mr Colleymoore, the snowstorm outside is building.

**Max** appears in the window and throws snow out.

**Robert**  If we’re not careful we’ll be snowed in to this slaughterhouse. We must discover the guilty man.

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

*He exits through the downstairs door.*

**Robert**  This whole business is a disgrace. Now, let us remind ourselves of what we know.
The Play That Goes Wrong

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

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

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

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

Annie  Oh, the tension in this house is –
She trips up over the fallen curtains and drops her script on the floor. The pages go everywhere. She tries to pick them up but they are all out of order.

Annie  Oh, the tension in this house is . . . Oh, the tension in this . . . oh, it . . . oh, it’s tense.

Robert  Florence. How are you feeling now?

Annie (ad libs)  I’m great, yeah, really good.

Robert  That’s dreadful.

Annie (ad libs)  Oh yes, dreadful, I want to die!

Robert  That’s the spirit, Florence.

Dennis  But now, Miss Colleymoore, I must ask you an important question, where were you when the murder was committed?

He mimics the line to her. He points down and mimes drinking a cup of tea. Annie misinterprets.

Annie  I was on the floor with a moustache.

Robert  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  Of course, Florence, that’s what brothers are for.

Dennis  This is a disaster! And already it’s midnight.

Trevor  plays a loud clock chiming fifteen times.

Dennis  That was most ominous.

Robert  Ominous indeed.

Chris enters upstairs, holding a gun. He calls into the voice-pipe.

Chris  Study to lounge. Are you there, Colleymoore?

Robert  Inspector?

Chris  Quickly! Come up to Charles’ study. I need to speak to you.

Robert  At once, Inspector.

He gets into the elevator carriage. The elevator rises but the floor breaks, leaving him on the lower level. He falls out.

Chris  There you are, Colleymoore!

Robert  Yes, Inspector.

He tries to climb up to the upper level.

Chris  I must speak with you, Thomas.

Robert  Of course, Carter.

Chris  Are you sitting comfortably?

Robert  Most comfortably, Inspector.

Dennis and Annie try to push Robert up.

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

Robert  No one else is here, Inspector.

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

Robert  manages to get up on to the upper level and takes the gun from Chris.
Robert  Good Lord, where was it?
Chris  In the library. It was lying on the table, muzzle warm and the barrel still smoking.
Robert  Someone killed Cecil with this?
Chris  Yes, less than half an hour ago.
Robert  But... who?
Chris  I was hoping you would be able to tell me that, Colleymore? After all we are friends, aren’t we?
Robert  I have no idea who killed Cecil, I was down in the kitchens when I heard the gunshots, fetching my sister some refreshment...

He forgets his line.

Trevor  I don’t know what page we’re on, mate!
Robert  I don’t know what page we’re on, mate.

He realises this isn’t the line and looks to Trevor furiously.

Chris (prompts Robert)  Besides, why would I / want to...
Robert  Besides, why would I want to kill my oldest friend’s younger brother?
Chris  Perhaps because you found out about his affair with Florence. We all know you’re a jealous man, Colleymore, ruthlessly protective of your sister.
Robert  Protective! I approve of whatever makes my sister happy.

Lights shift to downstairs. There is a heavy knock at the door.

Dennis  Who the devil could that be?
Annie (wrong page)  I don’t know either, Miss Colleymore!

Dennis  I don’t know either, Miss Colleymore! Quickly, we must hide you out of harm’s way. Charles had a hidden passageway built behind this bookcase. Stand back, I’ll open it.

He pulls a book down from the bookshelf. It falls to the ground. Nothing happens. He looks at the bookcase. It turns and swallows him up.

Dennis (off)  Step inside, Miss Colleymoore.

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

Dennis  You’re safe in there, Miss Colleymore.

The bookcase spins round again, spitting Annie out.

Dennis  You’re safe in there, Miss Colleymore.

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

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

Max  I was gardening late in the grounds with Winston, when we got caught in the storm and couldn’t make it home.

Dennis  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!

They look at the lead. Nothing happens.
Dennis  Mr Haversham was murdered tonight.
Max  Charles Haversham?
He walks into the pillar supporting the upper level and knocks it out, causing the level, with Robert and Chris on it, to slant slightly. The drinks trolley and chair roll across the floor. Robert stops them before they roll off the edge. Chris and Robert slowly edge to the door and try to go through it, but the handle comes off, leaving them trapped.
Dennis  And not only that, his brother Cecil has also been killed.
Max  Heavens! That explains the strange goings on I have seen in the grounds this evening.
Dennis  Strange goings on?
Max  A mysterious figure stood by the shrubbery that stands outside this very room and I noticed that the latch on the window was forced open and Winston found this on the ground beneath it.
He produces a handkerchief from his pocket.
A lace handkerchief. Quiet, Winston! Stained with a deep red mark with a distinctive scent.
Dennis  Cyanide.
Max  Precisely, cyanide . . . and you can tell from the shape of the mark it’s been used to hold a bottle. But not only that, the handkerchief is also embroidered with the initials ‘F.C.’
Dennis  . . . Florence Colleymoore.
Max  Indeed.
Lights shift upstairs.
Chris  I must show you something, Thomas. No doubt you’ll find it interesting.
Robert slips forward slightly.
Robert  What is it, Inspector?
He edges to the elevator and looks inside. He shakes his head. **Chris** jumps off the edge down on to the lower level.

**Chris**  Perkins.

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

**Max**  Hold your tongue, we all know what you’ve done! Woah, Winston! Down boy!

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

**Max**  I’m sorry about Winston, Inspector. I’ll put him outside.

He throws the lead out of the door.

**Chris**  Arthur, I presume.

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

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

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

**Chris** *(aside to Dennis)*  Nine.

**Dennis**  Ninety-nine years.

**Chris**  Ninety-nine years? What a dedicated man. But Arthur, I was informed you left Haversham Manor at six o’clock today? It appears you were hiding in the grounds on the night two men were murdered here.

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

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

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

*He holds out the monogrammed handkerchief.*

**Chris**  A handkerchief.

**Dennis**  Monogrammed –

**Chris**  Monogrammed!

**Max**  – and stained with cyanide.

**Chris**  Cyanide!

**Max**  Dropped on the ground beneath the forced window that was used to gain access to this room so someone could poison Charles.

**Chris**  Good God! How dreadful! I must inspect this handkerchief in more detail. Colleymoore, fetch my magnifying glass from Charles’ desk.

**Robert**  Without delay, Inspector.

**Robert**  tries to get up and reach out for the magnifying glass but can’t. The upper level suddenly drops again, putting it on even more of an incline. This sends the desk sliding down towards **Robert**, who manages to stop it and hold all the furniture. He rummages in the drawer, produces the magnifying glass and passes it to **Chris**.

**Robert**  Your magnifying glass, Inspector.

**Chris**  Thank you, Thomas.

**Dennis**  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? *(Beat)* It’s for you, Mr Colleymoore.

**Robert** *(from beneath the furniture)*  Another telephone call?

**Max**  Yes, sir.

**Robert**  Who is it, Arthur?

**Max**  Mr Fitzroy, sir.

**Robert**  Hand me the receiver, Arthur.
**Max**  tries to pass [**Robert**] the receiver but the cord doesn’t reach.  **Max** and [**Chris**] create a chain of arms from the phone with [**Chris’**] hand in a phone shape at the end, which after some stretching they manage to get to **Robert**’s ear.

**Robert**  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! 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**  Mr Colleymoore, you look like you could use a scotch.

**Robert**  Na! No more scotch thank you, Perkins. What a dreadful evening! I must check my bank records once more, if you’ll excuse me . . .

_He begins to try and exit through the upstairs door, crawling with all the furniture towards it. The desk has ‘Two Sisters’ written on the back of it._

**Robert**  If you’ll excuse me . . . If you’ll excuse me!

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

**Chris**  What is it, Perkins?

**Dennis**  It bears initials . . . the initials ‘F.C.’

**Max**  Florence Colleymoore is the murderer, Inspector!

**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 –

**Annie**  Cecil!

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

---

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

**Robert**  Eventually gets all the furniture out of the door. More vamp downstairs if necessary.

**Robert**  If you’ll excuse me.

_He closes the door._

_(Off.)_  I think it’s going rather well!

_He is immediately seen falling past the window._

**Chris**  You are the murderer, Miss Colleymoore.

**Annie**  Me! The murderer! How can yo –

**Robert** _enters sharply through the downstairs door; knocking Annie out._

**Robert**  I checked my bank recor – Oh!

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

**Robert**  She’s having another one of her hysterical episodes.

_He and Chris lift up Annie’s body and sit her on the windowsill._

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

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

_She bursts in through the swivel bookcase in her underwear. Chris and Robert 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 shall examine Charles’ body for evidence of cyanide poisoning. Colleymoore, Perkins, show me to the service quarters of the house to check the deceased once more.
Miss Colleymoore! I do not feel as you suggest! You are a murderer and a seductress and I shall not be seduced.

He pushes Sandra away a little too hard and she knocks into the clock.

Trevor is startled within the clock and opens the door, knocking Sandra out again. She flops on to the chaise longue. Max and Trevor look at one another. Max gives Trevor the script. Trevor reads Florence's next line from the script.

Trevor (reads) But I'm a beautiful woman, how can you resist me?

Max and Trevor try to continue while loading Sandra's unconscious form into the clock.

Max Stop, Miss Colleymoore! You are using your power over men as you always have.

Trevor (reads) You can't pretend your feelings aren't real!

Max Very well, Miss Colleymoore, it is true perhaps that I have admired you.

Trevor (reads) Then kiss me, Arthur! You know you want to!

Beat. Trevor then approaches Max. Max looks away.

Trevor Kiss me, Arthur! You know you want to!


Robert What on earth is going -

Silence.

What on earth is going on?

Max I can explain.

Robert I don't think you can.

Dennis Miss Colleymoore in Arthur's arms?

Chris A second affair?

Robert Florence, you've changed.
Trevor (reads) Your wild accusations have driven me to this! My nerves are a wreck! I feel dizzy!

Chris I suggest you settle down, Miss Colleymoore!

Dennis Quickly! Where's her medication, Mr Colleymoore?

Robert Blast, I must have left it in the study.

He exits through the downstairs door.

Chris Miss Colleymoore! You are a vile criminal!

Dennis And to think we took you in!

Max You manipulated me! I have let my master down tonight!

Chris All the while you were plotting your fiancé's demise!

Trevor Oh no, Inspector, all these accusations... I feel an episode coming on.

He begins to have an episode. Chris pushes Trevor aside and he trips under the upper level.

Chris No, Miss Colleymoore.

Robert reappears through the upstairs door. As he steps on the upper level, it fully collapses, crushing Trevor. Silence.

Robert (to Chris) I don’t think they noticed.

He exits and closes the door, causing a lighting truss to swing down from the rig.

Chris An adulteress and cold-blooded killer!

Sandra (within the clock) I'm not, Inspector!

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

Chris Yes you are, Miss Colleymoore!

Sandra (from within the clock) Oh, Inspector! I can't take this any more! I shall faint!

The clock is lowered on to one side. Beat.

Dennis She's fainted.

Max It's all become too much for her.

Chris Quickly, lie her down on the chaise longue.

Max and Dennis lift the clock on to the chaise longue. Beat. The legs snap on the chaise longue.

Chris That's better.

Robert, entering with the pill box and a glass of water, sees the clock.

Robert I found Florence’s medication... What's happened?

Chris Florence has fainted.

Robert Good Lord. I'll wake her up. (Throws water on to the clock.) She's out cold.

Chris But Arthur, is this the figure I saw outside the window earlier on this evening?

Max I cannot tell, Inspector. Mr Colleymoore, please move her hands from her face.

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

Max It was not her, Inspector. Besides, the figure I saw was that of a man.

Annie slowly stands up in the window. Robert shoves her out of sight.

Chris Of course it was, you were taken in by a handkerchief planted outside to frame Florence. She and Cecil both have plausible motives for murder... but the true motive belongs to Perkins.

Annie enters through the door, getting in between Chris and Dennis as Chris points to Dennis.

Dennis Me, Inspector?

Chris You, Perkins! It appears Charles made Perkins the sole beneficiary of his inheritance.
Dennis  This is all a mistake!
Chris    Save your pleading . . .
Annie   climbs up on top of the clock to resume playing Florence.
Chris    Save your pleading for the police station.

He throws handcuffs to Robert, who cuffs Dennis to the chaise longue.

Chris    Thomas, handcuff him to the chaise longue lest he escape before I can drive him there.
Max      That won't be for hours, the snow is at its peak.

Snow is thrown through the window into Chris' face.

Dennis    It's not true, I tell you.
Annie    What happened! I must have fainted! Curse my delicate constitution.

Sandra   opens the door of the grandfather clock, hitting Annie.
Sandra    What happened! I must have fainted! Curse my delicate constitution.

Robert   You did faint, Florence! We've learned that Perkins committed the murder!
Sandra    Perkins? But he's such a kindly old man.
Dennis    There must be some misunderstanding! I didn't kill Charles. But I know who did.
All       WHO?
Dennis    INSPECTOR CARTER!

All gasp.
Max       What on earth?
Chris     Poppycock!

---
Dennis    You did it, because Charles knew about the police money you were - (Checks hand) embezzling.
Chris     Nonsense!
Dennis    You say you'd met before - that he was a consultant on a fraud case you were working on.
Chris     What of it?
Dennis    Charles found the reason why no arrests had been made were because the man committing the crime was yourself. You were the - (Checks hand again) The perpetrator. You were the perpetrator.
Chris     You can't prove it.
Max       But Charles could, and that's why you killed him.
Chris     Never!
Dennis    I know your secret, Inspector. What will you do? Kill me too?
Chris     (draws a gun and points it at Dennis) I will! Confound it.
Sandra    and Annie  What a devil of a situation this is.
Jonathan enters through the downstairs door, again holding his gun.
Jonathan  Not so fast, Inspector!

All hugely shocked at this.
Robert     Charles!
Chris      Haversham!
Dennis and Max  Sir!
Sandra     Charley! I thought you were dead.
Chris    You're alive? It's not possible.
Jonathan   Oh, I'm afraid it is. You couldn't kill me that easily.
Chris       How did you survive?
Jonathan I simply didn’t drink the poisoned sherry you left out for me this evening.

Sandra Oh Charley, this is more than I...

Annie sings Sandra offstage through the swivel bookcase and stands next to it.

Annie Oh 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’d try to kill me. For months now I’ve had my guard up and tonight you fell into my trap.

The bookcase suddenly swivels, swallowing up Annie and revealing Sandra.

Dennis You’ve been hiding in the grounds ever since this afternoon when you planted the poison.

Max It was you that I saw. You were the mysterious figure.

Sandra I thought it was strange...

The bookcase swivels again this time revealing Annie. She puts her back across the bookcase blocking Sandra from coming back in.

Annie I thought it was strange you got here so quickly in such terrible weather.

Sandra keeps trying to swivel the bookcase from offstage but is still blocked by Annie. She runs over to the window and Annie quickly follows her, picking up a tray on her way.

Max But what about the handkerchief bearing Florence’s initials?

Jonathan Perhaps you should ask Inspector Carter, or should I say Inspector Frederick Carter.

All F.C.!

Max The same initials.

Dennis Precisely, and after committing the crime you found Charles’ will in his ledger and tried to pin the whole thing on me.

Sandra appears through the window.

Sandra You damned crafty devil!

Annie You damned crafty devil!

Jonathan Crafty, indeed. Perkins here is as innocent as I am. Remove those handcuffs this instant!

Robert Of course, Charles, I have the key.

He goes to release Dennis but he doesn’t have the key. As he searches his pockets for the key, Dennis remains handcuffed to the chaise longue. Sandra is seen getting up behind the window and running to the downstage door. Annie is there first and holds the door shut.

Jonathan Drop the gun, Inspector!

Sandra (off) Aye / me!

Annie Aye me!

Chris Never! I came here to kill you Charles, and I won’t leave until the job’s done.

Jonathan It’s over, Inspector. I could prove your guilt in a second. I have the evidence upstairs in the safe in my study. Fetch the papers, Perkins.

Dennis Yes, sir.

He goes to leave but is still handcuffed to the chaise longue. Robert and Max lift the clock off the chaise longue and Dennis slowly starts to drag the chaise longue over towards the fallen study floor to fetch the papers. Robert and Max place the clock down centre stage.

Jonathan Lower your weapon, Inspector. It’s over.
Chris  What are you going to do, Charles? Shoot me in front of a room full of witnesses?

Jonathan  Don't think I wouldn't do it, Carter! You tried to kill me; I'd merely be returning the favour!

Annie  Please, Inspector! You're frightening —

Suddenly Sandra bursts out of the clock. Annie opens the door to reveal no one there. Annie is furious, the others amazed.

Sandra  Please, Inspector! You're frightening me!

Chris  You ought to be frightened!

Jonathan  Arthur, keep everyone in this room while I send a wire to the local police.

Max  Yes, sir.

Jonathan hands: Max the gun and exits through the downstairs door.

Sandra and Annie  You monster! You tried to kill Charles and you killed Ce —

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

Sandra  — and you killed Cecil. How could you!

She stands back in front of the window but Annie pops up and drags her out through it and throws her on the floor. Annie dives on to Sandra with her shoulder.

Chris  I'll admit, I tried to kill Charles, but I never went anywhere near Cecil. In fact when I discovered that you and he were having an affair I was overjoyed. I had the perfect man to pin it on. Until my accomplice blundered in.

Max  Your accomplice?

Robert  rushes to the door and tries to get out.

Chris  Thomas Colleymoore!

Robert  arrives at the door, Max turns quickly and the barrel of the gun flies off, narrowly missing Robert.

Robert  It's true. I'm the Inspector's accomplice; I helped him 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 door comes off in his hand.

We're trapped.

He quickly ditches the door offstage.

Chris  Quickly, Colleymoore! Get in the elevator. We can escape down the east staircase.

Max  Get away from the elevator, you two. Winston, get him, boy!

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

Chris  Down, Winston!

He throws the lead out of the window. Jonathan bursts in through the upper-level door, falls off the edge, grabs on to the broken truss and swings across the stage, sending Chris, Robert and Max flying.

Jonathan lands by the downstairs doorway trembling.

Jonathan  Now to send that telegra - Aaaahh!

Chris  Quickly, Colleymoore, we can escape through the study.

Dennis  slides down the upper-level floor, still handcuffed to the chaise longue and now carrying the papers. Dennis throws the papers to Jonathan.

Dennis  The papers, sir.

He throws the papers to Jonathan.

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

Dennis  Yes, sir.

He carries the chaise out through the door. Chris and Robert run up the ramp and cling on to the set.

Robert  Get out of my way, Charles.
Chris Push him aside, Colleymoore. Do you want to spend the rest of your life in jail?

Robert I will strike you down, Charley! I will strike you down, Charley!

He tries to strike but overreaches, trips and slides down to the bottom of the study floor, grabbing at Chris to save himself. Robert drags Chris to the bottom with him.

Chris It’s useless, Colleymoore, there’s no way out.

Sandra runs back in.

Sandra Brother! I’m surprised at –

Annie appears in the window with the ledger, hits Sandra in the stomach and then over the head with it.

Annie Brother, I’m surprised at you. I don’t know what you’ve become.

She jumps in through the window.

Robert (getting up) I feel so ashamed. Carter and I found that between us we could steal money from the police’s sundry accounts easily. Carter had access and I had the facility to move the money fast and keep it secure, or so I thought until earlier on this evening . . .

He forgets his line.

Line!

Trevor emerges from below the collapsed upper level.

Trevor This set’s a bloody death trap!

He shuffles off through the door.

Robert This set’s a bloody death trap!

Chris (prompt Robert) As for Cecil . . .

Robert As for Cecil, that was more a crime of passion, simple as that.

Jonathan Now I hold in my hand, a written list of every fraudulent transaction Thomas Colleymoore and Inspector Carter made.

Annie This can’t be true. I can’t believe –

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

Sandra This can’t be true. I can’t believe it! I won’t believe it!

Jonathan Your sordid affair sickened me, Florence. You broke my heart.

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

Sandra and Annie I made a mistake. Please, take me back I’ll be yours all over again.

Jonathan Take back a woman who betrayed me? Never!

Sandra and Annie Charley! You’re all I have! Love me! Please! Don’t cast me aside! I shall be an outcast in the town! / My friends shan’t speak to me. Never again shall I feel your embrace! Let me be your wife!

Dennis slides back down the floor with the reading glasses and heads for the door.

Dennis (over the shouting) Your reading glasses, sir!

Jonathan (over the shouting) Thank you, Perkins!

Doorbell sounds. Noise subsides.

Get the door, Perkins.

Dennis Yes, sir!

He exits, still with the chaise longue in tow.

Jonathan That will be the police to arrest you both.

Annie grabs Sandra’s ankles and drags her out through the door.

Annie Charley! I cannot bear –
**Sandra** Charley! I cannot bear it! Look at me, like you used to look at me!

**Jonathan** 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! No! No! This is the worst night of my life!

**Max** I think this is the worst night of all of our lives.

**Annie** goes through the door and appears in the window. She stamps on **Sandra** before ducking out of sight.

**Jonathan** But Thomas, Carter had you fooled, didn’t he?

**Robert** What do you mean?

**Jonathan** He never intended to share the money with you!

*Let me summarise . . .*

**Annie** (through the window) I love you, Charley!

She begins hitting **Sandra** with the tray.

**Jonathan** Inspector Carter knew I discovered you and he were both embezzling police money, so you hatched a plan to kill me, planting cyanide in my sherry.

**Annie** appears with a roll of industrial tape.

**Annie** I’ve still got the ring, Charley! We can make it work!

She begins to tape **Sandra**’s hands together.

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

**Annie** looks up from taping **Sandra**.

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**Annie** TAKE ME, CHARLEY! IF YOU KNOW WHAT’S GOOD FOR YOU!

**Jonathan** Except what you didn’t know, Thomas, was that the Inspector made a nine thousand pound withdrawal from your private accounts this morning and after framing someone for my murder planned to flee with a one-way ticket to Dover, taking every penny with him! I think it’s time to have a look inside your attaché case, Inspector.

*He throws the attaché case to **Robert**, who opens it and produces a small green bottle.*

**Jonathan** The bottle of cyanide!

**Robert** produces a bundle of bank notes.

**Jonathan** Thomas Colleymoore’s nine thousand pounds!

**Robert** And of course, your one way ticket to . . . Duran Duran!

*He produces a Duran Duran CD from the attaché case.*

**Jonathan** He allowed you to take all the risk by storing the stolen money in your private accounts. Isn’t that right, Inspector?

**Chris** Alright, it’s true. I forged your signature at the bank and took out every penny. I hadn’t bargained on your accountant catching on this quickly and telephoning you so soon.

**Annie** has made it back onstage. **Sandra** appears in the window, tied up with tape. **Robert** runs at **Chris**, seizes his gun and points it at him.

**Robert** You rogue! I trusted you! You made a mistake there, Carter, and I’m afraid it’s your last!

**Chris** No!

**Robert** fires the gun. It doesn’t fire. *He tries the gun again: nothing. He tries again.*

**Chris** BANG!
Chris falls to the floor. Robert lowers the gun to his side, where it explodes loudly, hurting his hand.

Robert ARGH! My fingers!

Dennis The officers are waiting in the hall, sir—

He enters through the downstairs door, knocking over the whole door flat with the chaise longue. Chris rolls out of the way of the falling flat, Robert moves back colliding with the fireplace flat, sending that over as well. The wall at the top of the upper levels collapses. Silence. Stillness. Suddenly the window flat falls down as well, leaving Annie standing in the window frame and revealing Sandra dazed backstage. Silence. Stillness again. Max throws snow from offstage.

Jonathan Excellent. Escort my fiancé downstairs, Perkins. I wish to have a word with Thomas in private.

Dennis and Annie stay, trapped by the fallen flats.

Dennis Yes, sir.

Jonathan Thomas! You’re not the man I knew from Eton, you’ve become greedy and jealous!

Robert I’m sorry, Charles; my nerves are in shreds.

Jonathan There’s a glass of sherry next to the telephone.

Robert Thank you, Charles! Ever the kind host!

Jonathan Drink it up.

Robert Most kind!

He drinks the sherry.

Jonathan Tell me, Thomas, one last thing.

Robert Anything, Charles. I shall tell no more lies!

Jonathan The glass of poisoned sherry the Inspector left out for me—what do you suppose I did with it?

Robert Well, I don’t... know. What do you mean? You don’t mean you gave me the... Charley? Charley?! (Forgets his line.) Line!

Trevor (off) Just die, for Christ’s sake!

Robert Just die, for Christ’s... How dare you!

He dies. Max throws snow from offstage. Jonathan moves centre. Lights fade and a spot comes up on him.

Jonathan Oh, how I wish this could have ended differently. Thomas, your lies and deceits have led you inexorably to this end. If men allow their conscience to be governed by avarice then death and destruction shall prevail. (With finality.) Betrayed by my brother!

A short burst of ‘Rio’ by Duran Duran plays, then quickly cuts out.

Cuckolded by my fiancé—

House music fades in.

— and almost murdered by my oldest friend. Let us hope we never again see a murderer at Haversham Manor.

The chandelier hanging above the space suddenly sparks and drops on to Jonathan.

Blackout just before it hits him.