

Side 1 - Trevor

Start

TREVOR comes DSC. ANNIE scuttles off.

TREVOR

Good evening ladies and gentle-

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

~~ANNIE~~

TREVOR

[ANNIE starts to try and repair the mantelpiece.
TREVOR address the audience.]

Right, welcome to *The Murder at Haversham Manor*. Can I kindly request that all your mobile phones and other electronic devices are switched off and please note that photography of any kind is strictly prohibited. Also if anyone finds a Styx CD box set anywhere in the auditorium, that is a personal item and I want that back. Please do drop it at my tech box end of the show. Enjoy the performance.

[House and stage lights go down. TREVOR exits SL.]

TREVOR

[On his 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!~~

TREVOR

[Still over the speakers.] -we need him back in his
 cage as soon as possible. What's Annie doing on stage?
 Get her off so Chris can do his stupid speech- oop!

[TREVOR's microphone cuts off. ANNIE hasn't
 finished repairing the mantelpiece. CHRIS enters
 from the SR wing in the darkness.]

End

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 toolkit with her. Spotlight comes
 up on CHRIS, cutting off his head.]

CHRIS

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and...

[CHRIS steps forward into the spotlight.]
 ...welcome to The Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society's
 presentation of *The Murder at Haversham Manor*. Please
 allow me to introduce myself; I am Chris the director,
 and I would like to personally welcome you to what will
 be my directorial debut [Pronounced day-boo.] 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
 three hundred and seventy-six of you affected will
 enjoy our little murder mystery just as much as you
 would have enjoyed *Mamma Mia*.

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 society's

(MORE)

Side 2 - Sandra, Chris

ROBERT

Dennis!

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. *[Tries to make a note by dragging one of the keys across the side of the vase. It clicks as it goes across the cut glass.]* And when were you engaged to be married?

SANDRA

In the new year.

[CHRIS writes on vase again.]

CHRIS

And when did you and your fiance 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.

[Pause.]

CHRIS

[Ad-libs] I think that's enough note taking for now.

[CHRIS puts the keys into the vase and puts the vase down on the SR 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?

Start

CHRIS
Did you love him, then?

SANDRA
How could anyone have benefitted?

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

SANDRA
Cecil?

CHRIS
Not even Cecil?

SANDRA
I wasn't having an affair Don't raise your voice to me Inspector!

CHRIS
YOU WERE HAVING AN AFFAIR!

SANDRA
[Slaps CHRIS.] Don't tell me to calm down!

CHRIS
Calm down Miss Colleymoore. *[Reacts to slap.]*

SANDRA
Which letter?

CHRIS
Then how do you explain this letter?

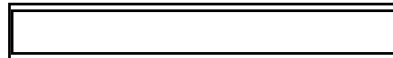
SANDRA
You've read my letter? Where did you find it?

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

SANDRA
Charles read it-

CHRIS
[Does SANDRA's line for her in a 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!

END



Side 3 - Robert, Dennis

Start

[JONATHAN (playing Charles Haversham) enters through the darkness from the SR 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 downstairs door. ROBERT (playing Thomas Colley Moore) and DENNIS (playing Perkins the Butler) can be heard behind it.]

ROBERT

[Off.] Charley! Are you ready? We're all waiting downstairs to raise a glass to your engagement. Charley?

[ROBERT 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. [Tries handle.] Damn it, he's locked the door. Hand me those keys Perkins.

DENNIS

[Off.] Here they are Mr. Colley Moore.

ROBERT

[Off.] Thank you Perkins. Let's get this door open. We're coming in Charley! We're coming in!

[ROBERT tries to open the door, but it won't budge. DENNIS and ROBERT hammer on the door to try and open it.]

[Still off.] There we are. We're in.

[ROBERT and DENNIS dart around the side of the set to enter.]

ROBERT

But what's this? Charles, unconscious?

DENNIS

Asleep surely Mr. Colley Moore?

ROBERT

Damn it Perkins, I hope so.

DENNIS

I'll take his pulse.

[DENNIS takes JONATHAN's pulse on his forehead. JONATHAN slowly tilts his head to move DENNIS' fingers down onto his neck.]

ROBERT

Blast! I knew something must have been 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 the general state.]

ROBERT

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

DENNIS
He's not breathing sir and there's no hint of a heartbeat.

ROBERT
Well I'm dumbfounded. He was right as-

[ROBERT crosses in front of the chaise longue, treading on JONATHAN's outstretched hand.]
-rain an hour ago.

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

ROBERT
Of course it makes sense. He's been murdered!
[Lights snap to red again. The same dramatic musical spike. Lights snap back to general state.]
Good God. Where's Florence?

DENNIS
She's 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.

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.] Lounge to dining room. Cecil! Miss Colley Moore! Come to Charles' private rooms at once. Charles Haversham has been murdered.

ROBERT
But do you think it was murder Perkins?

[ROBERT hangs his jacket up on a hook on the wall.]

Or do you think perhaps-

[The hook holding ROBERT's jacket falls to the floor.]

End

Side 4 - Max

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, TREVOR, ANNIE and JONATHAN 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 FIANCEE?

[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 Colleymoore does. Oh Inspector, he's a dangerously unhinged man, with a devil of a temper and Florence is
(MORE)

Start

MAX (cont'd)

his sister. Now I've said it once before and I shall say it once again; he couldn't stand the idea of giving her up to any man, let alone his old school chum. He saw them together at tonight's engagement party and he lost control and he 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.]

CHRIS

Thank you Mr Haversham! ...you've been most helpful Perhaps you could fetch Thomas Colley Moore. 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 exits slamming his arm in the door.]

MAX

Argh!

[MAX withdraws his arm and closes the door.]

CHRIS

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

[CHRIS sits on the chaise longue.]

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

[CHRIS lifts up the cushions; there is no ledger. He begins to search for it around the chaise longue. CHRIS vamps to cover, repeating "A ledger" over and over, becoming more desperate. He 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 "its underneath" or something similar to which CHRIS can respond:

Side 5 - Chris

[House and stage lights go down. TREVOR exits SL.]

TREVOR

[On his radio but broadcast to the whole theatre.]
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him before the guard dog scene-

CHRIS

Trevor! Trevor!

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[Still over the speakers.] -we need him back in his
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Get her off so Chris can do his stupid speech- oop!

[TREVOR's microphone cuts off. ANNIE hasn't
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from the SR wing in the darkness.]

CHRIS

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ANNIE

You need it...

CHRIS

We don't have time.

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[ANNIE hurries off into the wings taking the
mantelpiece and toolkit with her. Spotlight comes
up on CHRIS, cutting off his head.]

CHRIS

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[CHRIS steps forward into the spotlight.]
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allow me to introduce myself; I am Chris the director,
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because, for the first time in the society's history,
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(MORE)

1 of 2

CHRIS (cont'd)

numbers perfectly. If we're honest a lack of numbers has sometimes hampered past productions, such as last year's Chekov 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?*

Finally though 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. I'm of course referring to 2014's seasonal production of *Snow White and the Tall, Broad Gentlemen* or the previous year's pantomime, another Disney classic. *Ugly... and the Beast*.

Anyway onto 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 start 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 SR wing. Spotlight down. TREVOR takes up his position in his tech box. Darkness. Music.]

[JONATHAN (playing Charles Haversham) enters through the darkness from the SR 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 downstairs door. ROBERT (playing Thomas Colleymoore) and DENNIS (playing Perkins the Butler) can be heard behind it.]

ROBERT

[Off.] Charley! Are you ready? We're all waiting downstairs to raise a glass to your engagement. Charley?

Side 6 - Annie, Robert, Denis, Chris

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 Colley Moore?

ROBERT
~~She's coming.~~ Get in here Florence.

[JONATHAN opens the downstairs 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, ~~is~~
~~Thomas I'm frightened.~~] Thomas I'm frightened.

ROBERT
Don't worry Florence; you're safe in here with me.

DENNIS
What's happening sir?

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

ANNIE
Surely 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
Well this is a fine mess. The worst night I've seen in eighty- [Corrects himself.] eight years of service.

ANNIE
Save me brother.

Start

[ANNIE goes to CHRIS who pushes her back to ROBERT.]

ANNIE
Ooh, save me brother.

ROBERT
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.]

ANNIE
I can't believe... Cecil-*[Still pronounced ka-sill.]*

CHRIS
Cecil!

ANNIE
Cecil... is doing this.

DENNIS
Try to relax Miss Colleymoore.

ANNIE
I shall faint.

End

ROBERT
You shan't faint-

[ANNIE falls back without warning. ROBERT just catches her.]

ROBERT
-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
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.]

Side 7 - Jonathan, Chris, Sandra, Annie, Robert, Denis, Max

Jonathan enters through the downstairs door, again holding his gun.

JONATHAN. Not so fast, Inspector!
All gasp.

ROBERT. Charles!

CHRIS. Haversham!

DENNIS 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. 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. 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 Carter.

ALL. *F.C.*