

Side 1

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

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

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

If the audience starts to clap too early, Chris can say "not yet."

—for Susie H. K. Brideswell's thrilling whodunit—*The Murder at Haversham Manor*.

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

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

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

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

Robert/Rachel knocks on the door.

Come along now, Charley, you've been in there for hours now. If I didn't know better I'd say you were having second thoughts about the wedding. (Chuckles.) Charley? Hang it all, Charley, if you won't come out, we'll come in.

He/She tries handle.

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

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

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

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

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

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

But what's this? Charles, unconscious?

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

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

DENNIS/DENISE. I'll take his pulse.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—rain an hour ago.

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

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

Robert/
Rachel
Dennis/
Denise

START

~~Robert/Rachel~~

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

Good God. Where's Florence?

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

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

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

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

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

But do you think it was murder, Perkins?

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

Or do you think perhaps—

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

—it was suicide?

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

END DENNIS/DENISE. Suicide? Mr. Haversham? Not possible! Never was there a man with more zest for life than Charles Haversham. He was young, rich and soon to be married. Why on earth would he commit suicide?

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

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. Until today, it seems.

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

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

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

No.

Robert/Rachel closes the curtains again.

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

He/She picks up receiver.

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

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

Thank you, Perkins.

Dennis/Denise sits on Jonathan.

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

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

That's right.

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

That's right!

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. Thank you.

He/She hangs up.

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

DENNIS/DENISE. Inspector Carter?

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

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

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

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

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

Side 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He/She turns sharply to the door.

Florence!

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

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

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

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

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

SANDRA. I must!

ROBERT/RACHEL. You mustn't!

SANDRA. You controlling brute/fiend, unhand me!

Robert/Rachel pretends to release Sandra's hand.

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

DENNIS/DENISE. This way, Mr. Haversham.

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

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

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. Get out, you idiots.

They all quickly run off.

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

Sandra now enters through the door.

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

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

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

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

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. Hang it all, Charley dead.

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

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

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

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

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

There's not a drop left!

The bottle is now empty.

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

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

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

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

Robert/
Rachel

Sandra

Dennis/
Denise

Max

Thomas

Start



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

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

SANDRA. I can't imagine!

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

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

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

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

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

MAX. Oh Florence, this is unbearable.

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

Thomas/Mary, I feel I shall pass out.

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

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

MAX. Thank you, Perkins.

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

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

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

MAX. Well here's to a good brother.

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

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

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

MAX. Make it a double!

Dennis/Denise pours Max another glass of paint thinner.

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

Max drinks it again. He spits it out again.

MAX. Calm down, Florence.

DENNIS/DENISE. Another scotch, sir?

MAX. Yes!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MAX. Nonsense!

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

Side 3

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

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

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

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

MAX. Well—

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

Well thank God they've all gone.

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

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

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

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

It doesn't mean we killed the man.

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

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

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

—is just as it was. Except—

Max lifts the cushions and discovers a ledger underneath. Max puts it under the chaise longue.

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

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

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

Max goes down on one knee in front of Sandra.

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

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

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

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

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

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

MAX. Oh Florence, come into my arms.

Max pushes Sandra away.

SANDRA. I shall!

MAX. Kiss me!

SANDRA. Oh Cecil!

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

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

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

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

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

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

Robert/Rachel exits, closing the door.

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

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

Dennis/Denise bursts in.

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

MAX. Thank you, Perkins.

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

Sandra

Max

Robert/
Rachel

max

START



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

Dennis/Denise exits with the Inspector's notebook.

SANDRA. You don't think Perkins suspects us, do you?

MAX. That old fool, of course not.

SANDRA. Oh, enough words. Take me!

Robert/Rachel bursts in.

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

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

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

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

MAX. Damn these blasted interruptions!

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

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

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

Silence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At last we're alone.

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

SANDRA. Oh Cecil, let's run away from here. Far away! Together!

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

SANDRA. Cecil, tell me, who do you think killed Charles?

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

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

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

JONATHAN. Not so fast, Inspector!

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

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

MAX. Isn't it obvious? He/She—

Max falls over the chaise longue.

Argh! He/She was always bitter and possessive when it came to you! Throughout the following dialogue, Max begins miming his speech in a panic.

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

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

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

SANDRA. Oh I feel faint again!

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

END

DENNIS/DENISE. Of course, Inspector.

Dennis/Denise pours paint thinner again.

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

ANNIE. Not a soul.

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

CHRIS. Does anyone have access to the grounds?

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

ANNIE. No one, Inspector.

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

Chris and Robert/Rachel grab Dennis/Denise.

ALL. Then who could have killed him?

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

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

All gasp.

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

Annie realises her mistake and runs offstage.

Oh.

Blackout. Tabs fly in. Music.

End of Act One

INTERVAL ACTIVITY:

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

Side 4

ACT TWO

Dramatic house music plays.

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

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

Obviously I would be lying if I said the first act went entirely as rehearsed, there were one or two minor snags, which you may or may not have picked up on. But they are snags that you would expect to see in any production. And this certainly hasn't been the worst first act Cornley Drama Society has seen by some stretch.

Chris gives a hollow laugh.

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

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

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

CHRIS. Before we begin again—

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

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

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

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

Chris
Trevor/
Taylor
Dennis/
Denise
Annie
Robert/
Rachel

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

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

DENNIS/DENISE. No one could—

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

No one could have killed him, except for the people who are in this room.

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

All gasp.

ANNIE. (*Reads from her script.*) This is a disaster.

ROBERT/RACHEL. And it's not over yet! Two murders on one night at Haversham Manor, what a grizzly evening.

ANNIE. Frightful brother/sister, frightful.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Annie trips up and drops her script on the floor. The pages of her script go everywhere. Annie tries to pick up the papers, but they are all out of order.

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

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

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. That's dreadful.

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

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

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

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

ANNIE. On the floor with a moustache.

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

Annie reads off the wrong page of the script.

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

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

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

Trevor/Taylor plays a loud clock chime twelve times

That was most—

END

Side 5

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

...that was most—

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

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

DENNIS/DENISE. That w—

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

CHRIS. Trevor/Taylor!

Chris closes the study door.

DENNIS/DENISE. That was most ominous. (Pronounced "omoonoose.")

~~ROBERT/RACHEL. Ominous indeed.~~

Chris enters from study, holding a gun.

CHRIS. Colley Moore/Miss Colley Moore, I must speak with you privately.

ROBERT/RACHEL. At once, Inspector.

Other actors stay on even though they should have exited.

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. Of course, Carter.

CHRIS. Are you sitting comfortably?

ROBERT/RACHEL. Most comfortably, Inspector.

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

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

Actors scatter, realizing they should have left.

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. Good Lord, where was it?

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. Someone killed Cecil with this?

CHRIS. Yes, less than half an hour ago.

ROBERT/RACHEL. But who?

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

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

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

Line!

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

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

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

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. Besides, why would I want to kill my oldest friend's younger brother?

CHRIS. Perhaps because you found out about his affair with Florence. We all know you're a jealous man/woman, Colley Moore/Miss Colley Moore; ruthlessly protective of your sister.

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

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

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

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

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

Chris rushes to help Robert/Rachel stabilize the flat.

It appears he has changed the beneficiary.

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

Chris
Robert
Rachel
Trevor
Taylor
Dennis
Denise
Max

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

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

Good Lord!

CHRIS. That's right!

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

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

ROBERT/RACHEL. Yes, Inspector.

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

DENNIS/DENISE. Who the devil could that be?

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

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

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

(Off.) Step inside, Miss Colley-moore.

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

You're safe in there—

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

You're safe in there, Miss Colley-moore.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DENNIS/DENISE. Mr. Haversham was murdered tonight.

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

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

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

DENNIS/DENISE. Strange goings-on?

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

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

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

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

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

MAX. Precisely! Cyanide.

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

END