

Chris EPA

6.

[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.]

CHRIS

Leave it. Just leave it.

ANNIE

You need it...

CHRIS

We don't have time.

Start

[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

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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?