

Dennis EPA

7.

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 Colley Moore) and DENNIS (playing Perkins the Butler) can be heard behind it.]

Start

ROBERT

[Off.] Charley! Are you ready? ~~we're all waiting~~
~~downstairs to see a play to your engagement~~
~~Charley?~~

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[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. [knocks on door]~~
~~May it be that Charley, if you need assistance, we'll be in. [knocks on door]~~
 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!

[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. Colleymoore?

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.]

End

DENNIS

[Into the voice pipe.] 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?

[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.]