

The One-Act Play That Goes Wrong Auditions:

REQUIRED TO AUDITION: Online Audition form/bio, signed cast/crew agreement, and completed conflict calendar.

AUDITION Date/Times

Tuesday, December 6th, 5:30 – 8:30 PM
Ellensburg High School Little Theatre
1203 E Capitol Avenue, Ellensburg, WA 98926

CALLBACKS/ALTERNATE DAY:
Wednesday, December 6th, 5:30 – 8:30 PM
Ellensburg High School Little Theatre

What to Expect:

MOVEMENT & IMPROV EXERCISES:

This show is very physical, there are numerous comedic bits that will need to be done safely. We will have group movement exercises led by our stage combat choreographer. There also may be group exercises to evaluate character building skills. These will be fun, light-hearted, and do not need prep beforehand.

COLD READS:

You will be called up in groups to read scenes. There are several roles that could be cast as female or male presenting characters. So, for our purposes of the audition process, you might be asked to read for any of the characters. We will not spend time giving you the script and going away with your group to prepare. We will be reading group after group without breaks.

Tips on Cold Reading:

- **Research the production:** If it is a pre-existing script but you don't know what part of the script or what character you are reading for, read the whole thing. You should always read as much of the script that is available.
- **Connect with your scene partner(s).** This will help you slow down and really live through the imaginary circumstance. It will also make sure that you don't keep your eyes on your script but bring them up to where the casting team can see your acting.
- **Show Variation.** If you are asked to read for more than one character, make that character different from the last one you read for. And if you are asked to read for the same character more than once, find a different choice to make in the scene.

Synopsis

The Play That Goes Wrong begins before the curtain has even been raised, as the audience are present while the Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society prepare to stage their new production – the 1920s murder mystery 'Murder at Haversham Manor. However the set is not yet complete and there is no time to finish it off....the show must go on! With a murder (and a moving corpse) established from the beginning, the murder mystery gets into full flow. However, the props start to disappear, actors go missing and the set begins to collapse around, and often on, the cast. Mayhem ensues, the acting gets worse, and the set becomes increasingly dangerous, but the company struggles on regardless. The question is whether any of the cast and crew will remain standing, or conscious, by the final curtain?!

Character Breakdown

Chris

M/F. 30's/40s.: The head of the company. Rigid, uptight, everything really matters. Chris is the director of the play and plays Inspector Carter, the esteemed local inspector. This is the biggest day of his life. It is a nerve-wracking and exciting night. As the play progresses, we see Chris's calm exterior start to crack, but he never gives up hope that the company can deal with the issues, keep going, and successfully finish the play. British accent.

Robert/Rachel

M/F 30's: Plays Thomas/Mary Colleymore Jonathan's, best friend and Brother/Sister of Florence. This is the sort of actor who always gets cast as the 'best friend.' Earnest and optimistic, they always believe the show is going much more smoothly than it really is. British accent. Very demanding Physical Role.

Dennis/Denise

M/F 20's – 40s: Plays Perkins in the show. Very new to acting. Struggles with remembering lines and pronunciation. Slightly oblivious, but badly wants to get everything right. British accent.

Trevor/Taylor

M/F (any age): The play's lighting and sound operator. They struggle with staying focused during the show and are pulled away from their station to help with things happening on the stage. Loves Duran Duran and English New Wave music. Visible the entire show and be in character.

Jonathan

M 20's: Excited to be in another production of the Cornley Drama Society. Channels James Bond or other action hero for his character, Charles Haversham in the play. Is devastated when mistakes are made. Very physical Role. British accent.

Max

M 20's: Plays Cecil Haversham in The Murder at Haversham Manor. He has never been on stage before. He learned his lines and does exactly what he was told to do. When he gets a laugh he breaks the 4th wall and engages with the audience. Childlike and naïve. His mistakes are fundamental. Very physical role. British accent.

Sandra

F 20's: Plays Florence Colleymore. She is vain and possesses a huge ego. Has only ever had leads. Believes she is the best actor in the company by far. Doesn't deal with surprises or changes well. Very physical role. British accent.

Annie

F 20's-30's: Company stage manager. She has the biggest journey of any character. She works very hard behind the scenes to fix problems and keep the show moving. She is thrust into the show to fill in as Florence and is terrified, book in hand. As the play progresses she becomes very comfortable with the "acting" and decides she loves it and doesn't want to give it up. She will fight to the end for it. Very physical role.

Stage Crew: (any age): additional "stage crew" members are the "running crew" for the Murder at Haversham Manor. Some will be seen onstage as events happen during the show. (no lines). *May be asked to understudy one of the other roles.*

#1 ROBERT, DENNIS, SANDRA, MAX (pg. 13-15)

ROBERT. Lock every door, man. Not a soul gets out of Haversham Manor until the killer is found.

DENNIS . At once, sir.

ROBERTand assemble everyone in here.

DENNIS. Right away, sir.

Dennis goes to leave through the door, but it still won't budge

ROBERT ., Good God! Charles Haversham murdered at his own engagement party! *Turns sharply to the door* Florence! *We hear a bang as Sandra tries to get in through the door.*

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

Robert goes to try and open the door. Sandra appears in the window, stage crew holds the curtains open.

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

ROBERT . Don't touch him, Florence

SANDRA . I must!

ROBERT . You mustn't!

SANDRA . Unhand me!

Robert pretends to release Sandra's hand.

Oh Charles, one last embrace.

DENNIS . 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 the stage crew who had all been attempting to open it.

My brother? Dead? It can't be! *Sandra now enters and shuts the door.*

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

DENNIS . Right away, sir.

Dennis opens the drinks cabinet and takes out a full bottle of scotch.

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

ROBERT . Hang it all, there's another on the shelf.

Dennis produces the empty bottle he should have got the first time from the bottom shelf of the cabinet.

DENNIS . Yes, sir, of course you're right, this one's full.

ROBERT. 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.

ROBERT . 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, I think I'm becoming hysterical!

#2 CHRIS, DENNIS, SANDRA, ROBERT, MAX (pg.16-18)

CHRIS . What a terrible snowstorm. Good evening, I'm Inspector Carter. Take my case.

DENNIS . Yes, Inspector.

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. Tell me, are any of you the deceased's immediate family?

MAX . I'm Cecil Haversham. I'm his brother.

SANDRA . (Smiling.) I'm Florence Colley Moore. I'm his fiancée. Tonight was our engagement party.

CHRIS . What a damn sad thing. Have you poured everyone a stiff drink?

DENNIS . Yes, Inspector.

Dennis holds out the tray, and they all take a glass.

MAX . Well then let's all raise a glass To a man we all loved, to Charles

ALL . Charles!

They all raise their glasses and drink the white spirit. They all spit it out and try to recover.

CHRIS . Delicious.

SANDRA . Excellent.

ROBERT . Lovely.

CHRIS . Listen! You all must be distraught, but forgive me, the sooner I can begin my inquiries the sooner we can get to the bottom of this ghastly business. *(To Dennis.)* If you'd be so kind as to take the body downstairs, so I can examine it.

DENNIS . Yes, Inspector.

ROBERT . I lend you a hand, Perkins.

CHRIS . Then lock all the doors to the house and prepare this room, I shall conduct my inquiries in here afterward.

DENNIS . Inspector.

Dennis brings in a stretcher. Robert and Dennis lay the stretcher on the floor in front of the chaise longue.

MAX . Any ideas as to the cause of death, Inspector?

CHRIS . Could be a number of things. Strangulation, suffocation, poison. Before fully examining the body I wouldn't like to say.

SANDRA . How could someone do it?

Robert and Dennis try to lift Jonathan up but can't

CHRIS . Try not to think about it, Miss Colley Moore.

Robert and Dennis slowly start to roll Jonathan off the chaise.

As soon as I've...finished...do..wn...sta...irs. I'll speak to everyone individually and then you can get some space to calm your nerves.

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

CHRIS . I'll be back presently, as soon as I've finished. . . examining the body.

#3 SANDRA, MAX, CHRIS, DENNIS, ROBERT (pg. 21-22)

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 couldn't stand the idea of his best friend marrying his sister. He saw you two together at tonight's engagement party 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 have no doubt in my mind he would try and kill us as well, 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 over the door swings down and hits Chris in the face. Chris falls but then recovers and enters.

..But Now I have finished examining the body. Our interviews Can proceed. Perkins! Bring in Charles' personal effects.
Dennis enters with lots of bulky personal props.

DENNIS . Where would you like them, Inspector?

CHRIS . Set them down on the mantelpiece.

DENNIS . As you wish, Inspector.

CHRIS .Mr. Haversham, Miss Colley Moore, if 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 sits down again. 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.
Dennis walks to the fireplace and takes a cigarette out of the case

CHRIS . You and Charles Haversham, you were close?

DENNIS . Yes, sir, very close.

Dennis goes to light his cigarette; he burns his hand and drops the match into the coal scuttle, where it suddenly ignites

CHRIS . You don't appear very upse-
Robert bursts in wearing a fire mask and spraying a fire extinguisher wildly. He gets Dennis more than the coal scuttle.

ROBERT . , "Don't worry I've got it under control," etc.
Robert realizes he's been seen.

ROBERT . (Ad libs.) Evening, Inspector. We require the coal in the library. (Or similar vamp.) *Robert withdraws, taking the coal scuttle with him.*

DENNIS . On the contrary

ROBERT : (Off) Of course they didn't notice.

DENNIS . -I've barely-

ROBERT . (Off) I improvised!

DENNIS . He was such a kindly, charming man.

CHRIS . It's true.

DENNIS . You met him?

CHRIS . Once at the local police station. He was 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! 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 stares at him furiously.*

#4 CHRIS, ROBERT, DENNIS, ANNIE, JONATHAN, TREVOR (pg.31-33)

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 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 in an American accent.)*
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 . Oh no 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. *Annie goes to Chris, who pushes her back to Robert.*
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. I can't believe...Cecil-* *(Still pronounced "ke-sill")*

CHRIS . Cecil!

ANNIE . Cecil...is doing this.

DENNIS . Try to relax, Miss Colleymoore.

ANNIE . I shall faint.

ROBERT. You shan't faint-
Annie falls back without warning. Robert just catches her.

-confound it! What a devil of a situation this is. Now-
Jonathan bursts in, holding his gun.

JONATHAN . Not so fast, Insp... *(Realizes.)* oh for God's sake!
Jonathan realizes he is still too early and exits.

ROBERT. Now we're all going to survive tonight, you hear me? *Chris peers out of the door.*

CHRIS . Take cover!

ROBERT : Great Scott!

DENNIS . Good heavens!

ANNIE . Ay me!

CHRIS . Don't panic, Cecil is crossing the landing. We must lock him out!

ROBERT . Quickly, where are the keys to the door, Perkins?

DENNIS . Here they are, sir.

CHRIS . Hand them to me quickly, Perkins, before Cecil bursts in –
The door bursts open and Max staggers inside.

DENNIS No! No!

Max shuffles forward a few paces and then flops dead onto the chaise longue. We see three bullet wounds in his back.

ROBERT .Good Lord!

Lights shift to red and the short musical spike plays. Then the lights shift back.

ANNIE . Cecil's dead?

Lights shift to red again. The same short musical spike plays. Then The lights shift back.

DENNIS . A double murder!

The lights turn to red and a short burst of "Girls on Film" by Duran Duran plays." Then the correct musical spike cuts in. The lights shift back.

TREVOR . Found the Duran Duran.

CHRIS . Time of death: quarter to mid... *(Chris looks at the clock. It still reads five o'clock.)* Five o'clock.

ANNIE . Cecil! No. No. No. I loved him. I loved him. I know it was wrong. I know I was engaged to Charles. -but Cecil was mine and.
Silence. Chris turns the page in her script.
...I was his.

#6 JONATHAN, CHRIS, DENNIS, MAX, ANNIE, SANDRA (pg. 40-42)

JONATHAN . Not so fast, Inspector!

All gasp.

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

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 FC.

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-

Annie hits Sandra with the tray. Sandra falls out of sight behind the window:

ANNIE . You damned crafty devil!

JONATHAN . Crafty indeed. Perkins here is as innocent as I am. Drop the gun, Inspector.

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.

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 me!

More Chase/Fight things

SANDRA . Please, Inspector, you're frightening me!

More Chase/Fight things

CHRIS . You ought to be frightened!

JONATHAN . Arthur, hold everyone in this room. I'll send a wire to the local police.

#8 TREVOR , CHRIS (pg 9-10)

TREVOR. Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to The Murder at Haversham Manor. Can I kindly request that all your cell phones and other electronic devices are switched off and please note that photography of any kind is strictly prohibited. Also if anyone finds a Duran Duran' 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. Annie turns on Headlamp. (On his headset 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 enters from the S.R. vom turns to address Trevor, then Annie..*

CHRIS . Trevor! Trevor!

TREVOR . (Still over the speakers.) -we need him back in his cage as soon as possible. What's Annie doing onstage? Get her off so Chris can do his stupid speech-ooop!

Trevor's microphone cuts off. Annie hasn't finished repairing the mantelpiece.

CHRIS . Leave it. Just leave it.

Annie with the help of Stage Crew, hurries off into the wings, taking the mantelpiece and tool kit with her. Spotlight comes up on Chris, cutting off his head.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and...

Chris steps forward into the spotlight. .

..welcome to the Cornley 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.

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 number of society members perfectly. If we're honest a lack of members has

sometimes hampered past productions, such as last 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 bad, 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 for Susie H. K. Brideswell's thrilling whodunit-The Murder at Haversham Manor.

#9 MAX, ROBERT, DENNIS (pg. 28-30)

MAX. Did you find Florence?

ROBERT . She ran out into the grounds.

Robert shuts the door after Chris, causing the clock to fall off the wall. Robert picks up the clock and puts it back on the wall, knocking the barometer off. Max picks up the barometer and puts it back on the wall, causing the painting to fall down. Max goes to hold up the painting, leaving the barometer to Robert. They are left holding all three items up.

MAX . Tell me, Thomas, what were your feelings about Charles and Florence's engagement?

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 over-protective of your sister.

The telephone rings. They look to it, unsure of how they will answer it.

I'll get it.

Max tries hard to keep holding the picture against the wall and reach for the phone. The phone keeps ringing; eventually he manages to pick up the receiver.

Good evening. *Beat.* It's for you.

ROBERT . Who the devil is it?

MAX . Your accountants, Colleymoore.

ROBERT . At half-past eleven in the evening?

MAX . Yes.

Max tries painfully to pass the receiver to Robert. Robert eventually gets it, keeping the clock and barometer on the wall using his head.

(in extreme discomfort.) Good evening. Yes, Thomas Colleymoore speaking.

It is inconvenient, yes!... My recent deposits? What of: them?...

Discrepancies? What are you talking about, man?.. Gone? Gone where?...

Nine thousand pounds stolen? Good God, man! Perkins, get in here.

Dennis enters through the door as far as he can.

DENNIS . Yes, sir.

ROBERT . Perkins, fetch me my bankbook.

Dennis produces the bankbook.

DENNIS . Your bankbook, sir.

Dennis puts the bankbook into Robert's mouth. Dennis produces a pen and forces it into Robert's mouth as well.

ROBERT . (*Even more muffled .*) Thank you, Perkins.

Robert rearranges himself to take the phone again.

How could you allow this to happen? This is an absolute disgrace! Who am I speaking with? I'll report you to your superiors. Mr. Fitzroy. I'll write that name down. Mr... Fi...tz...roy...ro...ro...ro...oy, I have you know this telephone call has put me in a very difficult position. Now look here, Fitzroy, I didn't authorize this transaction, but you find out who did and you call me back.

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

MAX . What is it, Colleymoore?

ROBERT. Money, stolen from my accounts!

MAX . Good Lord!

ROBERT . Nine thousand pounds stolen from my private savings.

MAX . Most irregular.

ROBERT . What a ghastly business. First my oldest friend murdered in cold blood and now I find myself on the edge of financial ruin! This evening could get no worse!

MAX. Thomas, I'm afraid I have a confession to make. I wasn't going to say anything, but well, the Inspector seems to have found out and blast it, I'm tired of keeping secrets.

ROBERT . Spit it out, Cecil.

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

ROBERT . WHAT?!

Robert launches himself at Max, who dives D.S. The dog picture, funnel and barometer mysteriously all stay hung in their positions.

You and my sister?!

MAX. Now calm down, Colleymoore.

ROBERT . I knew it! You always were a snake in the grass.