

## THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG

**ABOUT THE PLAY:** Part Monty Python, part Sherlock Holmes, *The Play That Goes Wrong* is a play-within-a-play that follows the Cornley Drama Society's production of the 1920's whodunit, "The Murder at Haversham Manor." Despite their best efforts, the production rapidly goes from bad to disastrous, with madcap mishaps and choreographed chaos—from an unconscious leading lady, a corpse that can't play dead, a self-destructing set, and actors who trip over everything (including their lines). Nevertheless, the accident-prone thespians battle against all odds to make it through to their final curtain call, with hilarious consequences!

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:** *The Play That Goes Wrong* is a physically demanding show. Actors considering auditioning for this production should be in good physical shape. Most roles will require varying amounts of crawling, climbing up and down a ladder, lifting, running, and/or falling. There is also a carefully choreographed sword fight, repeatable hand-to-hand combat and special "handling" called for in the script.

**INTIMACY/COMBAT CONSIDERATIONS:** The play has moments of stage combat and a few moments of theatrical intimacy. We will be working with a Movement/Fight coach as well as an Intimacy Coordinator to assure the work will all be done safely and properly. It is the Waterville Opera House's goal to create collaborative storytelling work that will be consent-based and safe.

**CASTING CONSIDERATIONS:** We are looking for kind, hardworking, team first, physically adept actors who can commit to the upbeat, in-the-moment style of the play and fully inhabit the characters with an understanding of comedy with truth and humanity. Age ranges for characters are flexible (18+) and will depend upon groupings and pairings found through auditions. There may be some gender flexibility for roles typically male-identified, TBD through the audition process.

There are two main accents utilized in this show: American and Received Pronunciation, or RP for short, the instantly recognizable accent often described as "typically British" (One character must also use a cockney accent in addition to the RP accent)

We will be casting 8 named roles and 4-6 unnamed "shadow" rolls (backstage crew members) who will be fully involved in the rehearsal and performance process; they will be visible onstage and off for "*The Murder of Haversham Manor*".

### THE CHARACTERS:

**CHRIS:** (Head of the Drama Society and director of the show – also plays Inspector Carter). A first-time director but a decent actor (maybe he's been in a Shakespeare play once) who is perhaps a little melodramatic. This play is the biggest day of his life, and everything rides on the play's success; it is a nerve wracking and exciting night. He tries his best to keep the show on

track while gritting his teeth at the ineptness which surrounds him. Every time someone laughs, he becomes more frustrated at both his fellow actors and the audience. Note: The actor cast in this role will need to be comfortable performing on a seven-foot-high platform with no railing. (RP)

**JONATHAN:** (Plays Charles Haversham in “The Murder at Haversham Manor.”) Poor guy. He’s been cast as a corpse but has trouble playing dead. Don’t worry – he has some lines as the play progresses. He’s a bad actor but sees himself as very cool. He is excited to be in the show and is having fun. He technically must drive the show; he cares about the play, but not to the same extent as the others; very physical role. Note: The actor cast in this role must be comfortable performing on a seven-foot-high platform with no railing.

**SANDRA:** (Plays Florence Colley Moore, femme fatale and fiancé of the deceased who is having a secret affair with his brother). She is a diva and the company’s leading lady who thinks she’s more talented than she really is. (Or maybe she’s not too bright? There’s room for interpretation.) Sandra is vain and possess a huge ego; wants to be loved; has ambitions to go to Hollywood and will hurt anyone standing in the way of what she wants. She is smart enough to stay on the good side of someone who can help her (like the director. You know the type - the stakes are high.) Very physical role. Note: The actor cast in this role will need to be comfortable being in an enclosed box for up to 5 minutes. RP.

**MAX:** Plays Cecil, (a sweet dopey ingenue) brother of the deceased who is having a secret affair with Florence – also plays Arthur the gardener in Act II). He has never been on stage before; he learned his lines and does exactly what he’s told to do; he has zero connection with any of the other actors, but when he gets a laugh, he breaks the 4th wall and engages with the audience; his mistakes are fundamental; he doesn’t think anything through, just looks for approval. (RP & Cockney)

**ROBERT:** (Plays Thomas in The Murder at Haversham Manor, the deceased best friend and Florence’s brother). He wants to be Richard Burton (formidable and a bit pompous) with a declamatory acting style. This is the sort of actor who always gets cast as the ‘best friend’ or ‘brother.’ Earnest and optimistic, he always believes the show is going much more smoothly than it really is. As a result, he doesn’t feel badly when the show goes wrong and never learns from his mistakes. There is a power struggle between Robert and Chris to be president of the Cornley Poly Drama Society (a position that matters a great deal to Robert) Note: The actor cast in this role will need to be comfortable performing on a seven-foot-high platform with no railing. (RP)

**DENNIS [or DENISE]:** (Plays Perkins the butler). Probably the worst actor of the bunch. S/He has no desire to be in theatre, just wants to be liked and make friends – of which he has none. S/He believes if s/he is successful in the show, they will have success socially. Laughter from the audience is agony for him; s/he may be slightly oblivious but understands when he gets things wrong; the laughter is a personal tragedy/failure. S/He has difficulty pronouncing big words and must write a cheat sheet on their sleeve. Note: The actor cast in this role will need to be comfortable performing on a seven-foot-high platform with no railing. (Submissive RP)

**ANNIE:** (The stage manager). The stage manager who can generally solve problems quickly. She has the biggest journey of any of the characters. When Sandra must substitute as the leading lady, she goes from nervous to confident then downright competitive; her initial terror turning to joy by the end of the play. She starts small but grows and grows. American dialect.

**TREVOR [or Tina]:** (The play's lighting and sound tech guy). He simply wants to get on with the show; curmudgeonly and doesn't care for actors; he is easily distracted occasionally missing cues or forgetting to turn his mic off. He does many things he shouldn't, including engaging with the audience; when things go really sideways, he is forced to act in the play; he hates acting; Generally, stays backstage until he too must substitute as the leading lady. (This is the least physically demanding role and is less of a time commitment.) Note: The actor cast in this role will need to be comfortable being in an enclosed box for up to 5 minutes. (American dialect)

**FOUR-SIX MEMBERS of the Cornely Polytechnic Society's STAGE CREW** who are seen trying to get the play to go RIGHT. Actors in these roles must be physically fit, able to lift, run, prat fall and hold a variety of items including a "dead" body.