

THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG

by HENRY LEWIS,
JONATHAN SAYER & HENRY SHIELDS

The Play That Goes Wrong
Directed by: Dominique H. Eisengruber

**Auditions: Monday, January 15th and Tuesday, January 16th
6:30pm – 9:30pm**

**Pit & Balcony Community Theatre | 805 N. Hamilton St,
Saginaw, MI 48602**

Pit & Balcony Community Theatre is committed to providing a nurturing environment in which to share diverse experiences and ideas. In employment, volunteer recruitment, and casting we do not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, or military status. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community.

WELCOME!

If you're looking for a couple of months of a lot of work, mixed with loads of fun, then you're looking at the right audition form!

The Play That Goes Wrong is a beast of a show that requires precision and focus both on AND off stage – in order for everything to go *wrong*, it has to go *right*. Once you get past that part, this is one of the funniest scripts that you'll ever read. It's truly a show that will have audiences cackling, while hoping desperately that the actors can eventually catch a break (which never seems to happen).

– Dominique H. Eisengruber; *Director*

SYNOPSIS:

Welcome to opening night of the Cornley Drama Society's newest production, *The Murder at Haversham Manor*, where things are quickly going from bad to utterly disastrous. This 1920s whodunit has everything you never wanted in a show – an unconscious leading lady, a corpse that can't play dead, 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.

AUDITION EXPECTATIONS/SCHEDULE

Please complete the online audition form: <https://forms.gle/3d5FyhkRKj8Mzffj8>

6:30 – 7:30

Monologues – 1 Comedic Monologue, 90 seconds or less.

There will be a monologue provided (attached), but you are welcome to bring your own, memorized or not! We just want to see you have fun on stage solo.

7:30-8:00

Improv Game! – *Improv involves thinking quickly on your feet, as the actors are forced to do in The Play that Goes Wrong. This will give you a chance to come up with fun ideas/solutions for when things go differently than expected.*

8:00-8:10

Break

8:10-9:30

Warm-Reads – *Reading scenes from the script with other auditionees (scenes are attached to this packet).*

9:20-9:30

Review casting details/expectations.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

As with any play-within-a-play, you have the complication of the characters of the actors doing the play-within-the-play and the characters within the play-within-the-play. The text always uses the actors' names rather than the characters' names.

MEMBERS OF THE CORNLEY DRAMA SOCIETY

(in order of appearance)

ANNIE is the company's stage manager. American Accent

STAGE CREW The Cornley Drama Society Stage Crew

TREVOR is the company's lighting and sound operator. American Accent.

CHRIS is the head of the drama society; directed the play and plays Inspector Carter, an esteemed local inspector.

JONATHAN plays Charles Haversham, the deceased..

ROBERT plays Thomas Colleymoore, Charles' old school friend.

DENNIS plays Perkins, Charles' Butler.

MAX plays Cecil Haversham, Charles' brother; and Arthur, the Gardener at Haversham Manor.

SANDRA plays Florence Colleymoore, Charles' fiancé and Thomas' sister.

MASTER SHOW CALENDAR

Schedule is subject to change. A more detailed schedule will be available at the first rehearsal.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
14	15 Auditions Day 1 6:30-9:30	16 Auditions Day 2 6:30-9:30	17	18	19	20
21	22 First Read- Through 6:30-10:00	23 Blocking 6:30-10:00	24 Blocking 7:30-10:00	25 Blocking 6:30-10:00	26 Blocking 6:30-10:00	27
28	29 Blocking/ Work- Through 6:30-10:00	30 Blocking/ Work- Through 6:30-10:00	31 Blocking/ Work- Through 7:30-10:00	1 Blocking/ Work- Through 6:30-10:00	2 NO REHEARSAL!	3
4	5 Work- Through /Run- Through 6:30-10:00	6 Work- Through /Run- Through 6:30-10:00	7 Work- Through /Run- Through 7:30-10:00	8 Work- Through /Run- Through 6:30-10:00	9 NO REHEARSAL!	10
11	12 Run-Through 6:30-10:00	13 Run- Through 6:30-10:00	14 NO REHEARSAL! Happy V-Day!	15 Run- Through 6:30-10:00	16 Run-Through 6:30-10:00	17
18	19 Run-Through 6:30-10:00 OFF-BOOK	20 Run- Through 6:30-10:00	21 Run-Through 7:30-10:00	22 Run- Through 6:30-10:00	23 NO REHEARSAL!	24
25	26 Set-Tech 6:30-10:00 ZERO- CONFLICT	27 Set-Tech 6:30-10:00	28 Set-Tech 6:30-10:00	29 Set-Tech 6:30-10:00	1 NO REHEARSAL!	2 TECH 10:00-8:00
3	4 NO REHEARSAL! Dark Day	5 Tech 6:30-10:00	6 Tech 6:30-10:00	7 Tech 6:30-10:00	8 Tech/Dress 6:30-10:00	9
10	11 Tech/Dress 6:00-10:00	12 Tech/Dress 6:00-10:00	13 Tech/Dress 6:00-10:00	14 Tech/Dress 6:00-10:00	15 Show #1 6:00-10:00	16 Show #2 6:00-10:00
17 Show #3 1:00-5:00	18	19	20	21 Pick-Up Rehearsal	22 Show #4 6:00-10:00	23 Show #5 6:00-10:00
23 Show #6 1:00-5:00						

Additional Notes:

- Set-Tech: This is the week we will be implementing tech elements involving the set (i.e. walls falling, set pieces “breaking”, etc.)

COVID-19 POLICY

Pit & Balcony is committed to the health, safety, and privacy of all of its employees and volunteers. To this end we keep a close eye on all regulations and recommendations set forth by the Federal and State governments as well as local, state, and national health organizations.

At the time of compiling this packet, Pit & Balcony does not *require* masking or vaccination in order to take part in its productions and safety protocols may differ from person to person based on their vaccination status. Vaccination status may or may not impact castability. All volunteers and employees are encouraged to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and all booster shots as soon as they are able. All policies and protocols are subject to change without warning based on recommendations set forth by governing bodies and health agencies.

Sides

The first page below includes a monologue that you are welcome to use at the audition if you don't already have one.

****Note:** Using any monologue, including this one, will not affect your chances of being cast. Come as you are – no memorization required!*

The following pages include sides that will be available at the auditions.

Moment Before: Chris has just had an argument with crew members (very loudly in front of the audience) after pre-show mayhem.

CHRIS:

Good Evening, ladies and gentlemen, and 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 Ronald Dahl's *James and the 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*.

SIDE 1 – ROBERT & DENNIS

ROBERT: But what's This? Charles, unconscious?

DENNIS: asleep surely, Mr. Colleymoore?

ROBERT: Damnit, 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!

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 *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! 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 *(calling to the rest of the house)*: 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? Or do you think perhaps – it was suicide?

DENNIS: 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: But why on earth would anybody want to murder him? Charles was such a gentle fellow.

DENNIS: Generous, kind, a true...*(reads a word written on his hand)* philanthropist. He never had an enemy in his life.

ROBERT: Until today it seems.

DENNIS: shall I telephone the police, sir?

ROBERT: the police? They wouldn't make it out here for days in this snowstorm. No. I'll telephone Inspector Carter, he lives just the other side of the village. He'll be here in next to no time. Hand me the phone, Perkins. Thank you, Perkins.

SIDE 2 – MAX, SANDRA, ROBERT, DENNIS

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!

ROBERT: 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, I feel I shall pass out.

ROBERT: Perkins! Pour that man a stiff drink!

MAX: Thank you, Perkins.

ROBERT: There, there, Florence, well done, deep breaths.

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

MAX: Well here's to a good brother.

MAX raises his glass and rinks. He quickly spits it back out
That's the best whisky I've ever tasted.

ROBERT: Have another, to calm your nerves.

MAX: Make it a double!

DENNIS pours MAX another glass

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

MAX drinks again. Spits it out again.

MAX: Calm down, Florence.

DENNIS: Another scotch, sir?

MAX: Yes!

SANDRA: I can't believe he was 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 pushes JONATHAN back down onto the chaise.

MAX: My...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: It's true, his smile was often merely (*reads from hand*) a façade (*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: we all have, Perkins. Hang it, I knew Charley every since School.

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

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

SIDE 3 – SANDRA, JONATHAN, MAX, CHRIS, DENNIS

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

JONATHAN suddenly bursts through the downstairs door, holding a gun.

JONATHAN: Not so fast, Inspector!

MAX and SANDRA stare at JONATHAN. Pause. JONATHAN realizes he's come in much too early. He exits.

SANDRA: But why would Thomas want Charles dead?

MAX: Isn't it obvious? He –

MAX turns and walks upstage, hitting his head on the pillar underneath the upper level.

Argh! He was always bitter and possessive when it came to you!

Throughout the following dialogue, MAX begins miming his speech in a panic.

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 shield over the odor swings down and kits CHRIS in the face. CHRIS hastily pulls it off the wall and throws it offstage.

....But now I have finished examining the body our interviews can proceed. *(Calls off)*

Perkins! Bring in Charles' personal effects.

DENNIS: where would you like them, Inspector?

CHRIS: Set them down on the mantelpiece.

DENNIS: As you wish, Inspector.

DENNIS is supposed to leave, but doesn't.

CHRIS: Don't go, Perkins.

DENNIS goes to leave and then stops.

I'd like to ask you a few questions first. Mr. Harversham, Miss Colleymoore, if you'd be so kind as to give us a moment's privacy.

MAX: Naturally.

MAX and SANDRA exit. DENNIS sits.

CHRIS: Don't just stand there, Perkins, take a seat.

DENNIS sits down again.

SIDE 4 – ROBERT, DENNIS, ANNIE

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

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

ROBERT: 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. We know that he too was murdered on the same eve, in cold blood.

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

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

ANNIE trips over the rug 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 this...oh it... oh, it's tense.

ROBERT: Florence. How do you feel now?

ANNIE: (*ad libs, brightly.*) I'm good.

ROBERT: That's dreadful

ANNIE: (*ad libs.*) Oh, dreadful, yes, I want to die!

ROBERT: That's the spirit, Florence.

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

DENNIS mimes the line to her. He points down and mimes drinking a cup of tea. ANNIE misinterprets.

ANNIE: On the floor with a moustache.

ROBERT: 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: Of course, Florence, that's what brothers are for.

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

SIDE 5 – ANNIE, MAX, DENNIS, CHRIS, ROBERT

ANNIE: (*Reading from script.*) Thank heavens, Inspector. These two have been accusing me of the most dreadful things.

MAX: Hold your tongue. We all know what you've done! Whoah, Winston! Down, boy!

MAX mimes holding the dog back from CHRIS.

DENNIS: Winston, the Inspector's here to help us

MAX: I'm sorry about Winston, Inspector. I'll put him outside.

MAX throws the lead out the door

CHRIS: Arthur, I presume?

MAX: I'm the longest serving member of staff here at Haversham Manor.

DENNIS: He's been working for Mr. Haversham for ninety years.

CHRIS (*aside, to DENNIS*): Nine.

DENNIS: Ninety-nine years.

CHRIS: Ninety-nine years? What a dedicated man.

Hearing this, MAX hunches over and acts as though he is incredibly old. CHRIS continues his line through gritted teeth.

But Arthur, I was informed –

CHRIS turns and sees MAX.

I was informed that you left Haversham Manor at six o'clock today?

MAX: (*old man voice*) What's that, young man?

CHRIS grabs MAX and pulls him up to standing. MAX reverts to his normal performance.

CHRIS: It would appear you were hiding in the grounds on the night two men were murdered here!

DENNIS: Arthur became trapped in the storm and couldn't make it to the gates.

CHRIS: How implausible. I don't supposed you realise what you have walked into this evening then, Arthur?

MAX: On the contrary, Inspector. It appears I have discovered a clue that will close this case.

CHRIS: A handkerchief?

DENNIS: Monogrammed. (*pronounced "mon-oh-gram-ed"*)

CHRIS: Monogrammed.

MAX: And stained with cyanide. (*pronounced "ky-a-nid-ee"*)

CHRIS: Cyanide!

MAX: Dropped beneath the forced window that was used to gain access to this room so someone could poison Charles.

CHRIS: Good God, how dreadful! I must inspect this handkerchief in more detail.

Thomas, fetch my magnifying glass from Charles' desk.

ROBERT: Without delay, Inspector.