

**DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT...**

THE PLAY THAT GOES  
**WRONG**



**SUNDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2022**

**DUCHESS THEATRE**

Catherine Street, London, WC2B 5LA

# WHAT HAPPENS IN THE PLAY?

Things go wrong constantly throughout the play and at times it can make it quite hard to keep up with the storyline, here is a helping hand. The moments in red are where something goes really wrong!

## ACT ONE

The Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society are presenting an old fashioned Murder Mystery play called 'The Murder at Haversham Manor'. The play is set in a big stately home somewhere in England on a snowy night in winter.

The play begins with the Character Chris who, as the director of the play, gives a short speech about the performance.

As 'The Murder at Haversham Manor' begins, Thomas and Perkins discover Charles' dead body on a chaise longue in his private rooms. Thomas immediately makes a phone call to Inspector Carter to get police help. Florence and Cecil are also summoned and are very upset. Cecil is certain the death was a suicide and reads a passage from Charles' private diary that seems to say he knew his fiancé was cheating on him and was heartbroken.



The Inspector arrives very quickly and he asks Perkins and Thomas to take the body upstairs so that it can be examined. (Robert and Dennis try to do this but the stretcher they are using to lift him breaks and Jonathan is left to sneak off-stage.) He follows them leaving Florence and Cecil downstairs alone. The audience find out about their affair and Cecil proposes to Florence. Meanwhile, upstairs in Charles' study, the inspector discovers a letter in Charles' jacket. Whilst Perkins is checking the body for fingerprints, Thomas is sure he sees the dead body breathing.

Back downstairs the inspector conducts some inquiries, firstly he questions Perkins about how well he knew and liked Charles. Perkins tells him that they were very close and he could have no motive to kill him. Then he questions Florence and reveals to her that he has read the letter found in Charles' pocket and now knows about the affair. (Some of the lines between Sandra and Chris do not make much sense as the lines they are speaking go out of sync with one another) Sandra is outraged that the Inspector would suspect her of such a thing and begins shouting for help.

# WHAT HAPPENS IN THE PLAY?

At this point the actress playing the character Sandra gets knocked out by the door and her body is then dragged off-stage through the window. From this point onwards the actress playing the character Annie will take over the role of Florence.



Finally, the Inspector questions Cecil about his relationship with his brother which Cecil. The inspector accuses him but he denies any wrongdoing and leaves. The inspector is left alone to ponder who might be the murderer when he discovers a ledger (a kind of book for banking) with Charles' newly written last will and testament inside. Cecil and Thomas enter the room and the Inspector leaves via the elevator to examine this new piece of evidence.



In the downstairs room Thomas receives a confusing phone call from his accountant telling him that some money has been stolen from his bank account. Cecil then admits to Thomas that he has been having an affair with Thomas' sister. Thomas is very upset and they end up having a sword fight in which Cecil gets hurt. They exit the stage and gun shots are heard from somewhere in the house.

The Inspector, Perkins and Florence, gather in the downstairs room (This is Annie's first entrance in the role of Florence). Just then, Cecil comes reeling into the room with gunshot wounds and dies. Perkins and Thomas take the body outside and Florence has a hysterical episode at the loss of her lover. (Annie doesn't know how to represent the emotion properly as she is not an actor.) The Inspector asks a few more questions of the assembled group and they realise that the murderer must be one of the people currently in that room. (Dennis keeps saying a line from earlier in the scene and so they have to do it five times, with everyone getting increasingly angry with Dennis!)

# WHAT'S THE PLAY ABOUT?

## ACT TWO

The play starts again with another speech from the character Chris (not in his role), apologising for the mistakes in Act One. (When the curtain is lifted for the start of Act Two the cast are not ready and there is chaos on stage.) When the 'Play Within a Play' starts again the Inspector goes off in search of the murderer. Thomas, Florence and Perkins stand horrified at all the destruction and the clock strikes twelve.



From upstairs in the study, Inspector Carter calls through the voice pipe (A way of communicating between rooms in large houses) to Thomas asking him to come and join him. The Inspector reveals a gun that he has found, he tells Thomas that he knows it was him that killed Cecil and 'that wasn't the plan' suggesting that the inspector and Thomas may have had something to do with this evening's horrors.

Downstairs Florence and Perkins hear an ominous knock at the door. Fearing it may be the murderer Perkins hides Florence in a secret compartment behind a bookcase (At this point the stage manager Trevor finds himself accidentally on stage and hides inside the grandfather clock) but when he opens the door it is only Arthur the Gardener. Perkins explains the awful things that have happened there this evening. (At this point Arthur the Gardener knocks into the pole that supports the upper level knocking it loose and making the whole thing drop a little, making it very precarious for Robert and Chris who try desperately to get out. Robert accidentally breaks the door handle trapping them there).



Back downstairs Arthur reveals that he has found a handkerchief in the grounds that seems to be stained with cyanide (a very powerful poison). They notice that the handkerchief is embroidered with the initials F.C. and conclude that the murderer must be Florence Colley Moore. Perkins reveals her hiding place.

# WHAT'S THE PLAY ABOUT?

Upstairs the men talk about the last will and testament. In the event of his death, Charles had left his entire estate to Perkins. They conclude Perkins must be the murderer. (Chris is unable to go downstairs normally and has to jump off the side of the upper level). Just as the Inspector is about to blame Perkins for the murder he is confronted with the handkerchief and blames Florence instead. Just then the phone rings and it is Thomas's accountant again. (Robert is stuck on the upper level and laden with furniture so the cast have to create a chain across the stage to get the phone to his ear. As soon as he puts down the phone, he takes all the furniture and starts banging at the broken door until Jonathan comes to help him.)

Downstairs the assembled men blame Florence for the murder, she protests her innocence. (At this point Annie is knocked out with the door by Robert. Luckily Sandra wakes up just in time to take over the role of Florence again.) The inspector leaves Florence in Arthur's custody for a minute and she tries to win him over with her beauty but loyal Arthur resists (At this point Max pushes Sandra into the grandfather clock which surprises Trevor, who is still hidden inside, he opens the door knocking her out again. Together they hide her unconscious body in the clock and Trevor is forced to take on the role of Florence). Eventually Arthur can resist her no longer and they are caught kissing by the rest of the cast.

Florence faints after more accusations but Arthur realises that Florence can not be guilty as he saw a male figure creeping around the grounds. The Inspector returns his blame to Perkins and has him handcuffed to the chaise longue. Just then Charles bursts in and explains that he was not dead after all. The plan to poison him had failed. He reveals all he knows about the Inspector and Thomas's plan. He tells Thomas how the Inspector was pretending to be his friend but in reality he was stealing from him too.

Thomas shoots Inspector Carter and then Charles poisons Thomas, his former best friend. The play ends with Thomas surrounded by bodies praying that such an awful thing will never happen again.

(This section is pretty chaotic, Sandra and Annie both fight over who will get to play the role of Florence and the set begins to come apart ending with the whole thing falling down!)



# WHAT ELSE SHOULD YOU KNOW?

## LOUD NOISES

There will be loud noises throughout. These will be both recorded and live. It is all very controlled and you have nothing to worry about but sometimes it can feel a bit chaotic. If you think this may be too loud or too much for you, don't worry, just let a member of staff know when you book or arrive and we'll do our best to seat you somewhere that you feel comfortable. We can also send you a more detailed list of all the loud noises you can expect.

## WEAPONS

In the play you will see two swords and two different guns on-stage. These weapons are not real. The swords are blunted and the guns do not fire real bullets. The equipment is all made especially for use on stage. Late in act one and act two there will be gunshots

Towards the end of Act One there will be two sounds of Gunshots from off stage. These are just sound effects played on speakers but they are quite loud.

Right near the end of Act Two there is usually a gunshot on-stage. For this performance, there will be no gunshot. The actor will shout 'bang'.

## VIOLENCE

There is quite a bit of fighting between the characters. We call this 'Stage Combat' and we practice it every single day. You should think of it a bit like a dance. At times it might look and sound like people are really getting hurt but we have rehearsed very carefully to make sure nobody actually gets hurt. The sounds you hear are not real, they are being made backstage.

## COMMUNICATION

Sometimes the characters will talk to the audience. You do not need to reply but you can if you want. Just be aware that the actors may talk back! When the actors are not talking directly to you, you do not need to reply.

Sometimes in the show the actors may shout at each other but they are not really angry with each other.

## TOUCH TOUR

If you would like, you could come for a look around the stage to see how some of these things are done. If you think this might be helpful let us know when you book.

From everyone in **The Play That Goes Wrong** team, we hope you have a fantastic time!

If you would like to have a familiarisation visit to the Duchess theatre before the relaxed performance date in November,

please contact our Access Team on

**0330 333 4815**

or email **[access@nimaxtheatres.com](mailto:access@nimaxtheatres.com)**

### **ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?**

If you have any questions about your visit please free to contact our Access Team on **0330 333 4815**

We hope that you enjoy the show and your time with us here at the Duchess Theatre