CHRIS 1

The mantelpiece falls off the wall. Annie emerges from the wing.

ANNIE. *(To the audience member.)* You said that was fine.

TREVOR. *(Aside to Annie.)* Just leave it, leave it.

Annie starts to try and repair the mantelpiece. Trevor addresses the audience.

Okay, 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. Trevor exits S. L.

(On his radio 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. 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—*oop!*

Trevor's microphone cuts off. Annie hasn't finished repairing the mantelpiece. Chris enters from the S. R. wing in the darkness.

CHRIS. Leave it. Just leave it.

ANNIE. You need it…

CHRIS. We don't have time.

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

Start

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

* If music by a different band is used on pages 45 and 78, change "Duran Duran" appropriately.

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you to what will be my directorial debut *(Pronounced "day-boo.")* and my first production as head of the drama society.

Firstly I would like to apologise to those of you involved in our little box office mix-up. I do hope the six hundred and seventeen of you affected will enjoy our little murder mystery just as much as you would have enjoyed *Hamilton*.

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 off, 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—

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 S. R. wing. Spotlight down. Trevor takes up his position in his tech box. Darkness. Music.

Stop

Jonathan (playing Charles Haversham) enters through the darkness from the S. R. 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 Colleymoore) and Dennis (playing Perkins the Butler) can

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