

CHRIS. Leave it. Just leave it.

ANNIE. We need...

CHRIS. We haven't got time.

Annie hurries off behind the flat, taking the mantelpiece and tools with her. Spotlight comes up, Chris hurries into it.

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to The Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society's spring production of *The Murder at Haversham Manor*.

I would like to personally welcome you to what will be my directorial debut, 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 have managed to find a play that fits the company's numbers perfectly. If we're honest a lack of numbers has hampered past productions. Last year's Chekhov play, *Two Sisters*. Or last Christmas' *The Lion and the Wardrobe*, and of course our summer musical, *Cat*.

It may interest you to know that this will also be the first time the society has been able to stage a play of this scale. There's no question that usually we have to contend with a small budget, such as in last year's presentation of Roald Dahl's *James and the Peach*. Of course, during the run of that particular show the peach went off, and we were forced to present a hastily devised alternative entitled *James! Where's Your Peach?*

~~Finally we can afford to stage a play as it should be, and which, may I say, has been exceptionally well cast. I'm sure no one will forget the problems we've faced with casting before, such as our presentation of *Snow White and the Tall, Broad Gentlemen*, or indeed our previous year's pantomime, another Disney classic: *Ugly...and the Beast*.~~

But now, on with the main event, which I am confident will be our best show yet! So without further ado, please put your hands together for Susie H. K. Brideswell's thrilling whodunit—*The Murder at Haversham Manor*.

*Chris exits around the flats and the stage lights fade to black.
Jonathan (playing Charles Haversham) enters through the*