

# The Play That Goes Wrong Character Breakdown

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The Cornley Polytechnic Dramatic Society presents 'Murder At Haversham Manor', and everything that could go wrong, does. Looking for truthful, funny, physically adept performers who can commit to the style of the play and fully inhabit the characters. It is vital to believe in the characters who are performing the play within the play, as that is where the heartbreaking comedy comes from. With that in mind, we are looking for actors with a keen ability and understanding of comedy, but can play the truth of the scenes.

*PLEASE NOTE:* This is a physically demanding show. Most roles will require varying amounts of crawling, climbing, lifting, running, and/or falling. There is also a sword fight and some hand-to-hand combat. We will be working with a movement/fight coach to assure that this will all be done safely and properly. British accents are required for all characters except Annie and Trevor/Tina. Age ranges for characters are flexible (16+) and will depend upon groupings and pairings found through auditions. Most characters fall between 18-40.

**CHRIS:** Head of the drama society and plays Inspector Carter in "The Murder at Haversham Manor." High status clown. Rigid, uptight, everything really matters; he is the director of the show and this is the biggest day of his life; everything is riding on this; it is a nerve wracking and exciting night; his pain is evident and every time someone laughs the pain deepens; he has equal amounts of contempt for his fellow actors and the audience watching the play; British accent.

**Robert:** Plays Thomas Colley Moore in "The Murder at Haversham Manor." Wants to be like Richard Burton as evidenced by his declamatory style; he is, however, not a parody of a bad actor; he is unaware of others around him; he does not feel badly when things go 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); seeking an actor with real vocal power; British accent.

**Max:** Plays Cecil Haversham in "The Murder at Haversham Manor." 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 fourth wall and engages with the audience. Childlike and naïve. His mistakes are fundamental. He doesn't think anything through, just looks for approval. British accent.

**Dennis:** Plays the butler, Perkins, in "The Murder at Haversham Manor." He has no real desire to be involved in the theater; he just wants to make friends (of which he has none). He believes if he does well in the show, he will be more successful socially. Laughter from the audience is agony for him. He may be slightly oblivious but understands when he gets things wrong. The laughter is a personal tragedy/failure; British accent.

**Trevor or Tina:** The play's lighting and sound operator; they simply want to get on with the show; curmudgeonly and doesn't care for actors; they are easily distracted and do many things they shouldn't, including engaging with the audience; when things go really sideways they are forced to act in the play; they hate acting; American accent.

**Jonathan:** Plays Charles Haversham in "The Murder at Haversham Manor." A bit bland but sees himself as a James Bond type. Excited and having fun, but not naïve. He technically must drive the show. He cares about the play, but not to the same extent as the others. Very physical role. British accent.

**Sandra:** Plays Florence Colley Moore "The Murder at Haversham Manor." She is vain and possesses 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 but is smart enough to stay on the good side of someone who can help her. The stakes are high for her. Very physical role.

**Annie:** The stage manager; she has the biggest journey of any of the characters; when Sandra is indisposed Annie, who cannot bear to be on stage, must step in; initially terrified by acting, she is willing to kill for it by the end of the play; her initial terror turns to joy, and then to fury; she starts small, but grows and grows; American accent.