

Characters Breakdown for Reference

These character descriptions reference those in the full version of The Play That Goes Wrong. The One-Act version follows closely.

CHRIS: (Head of the Drama Society and director of the show — also plays Inspector Carter)

A first-time director but a decent actor (maybe he's been in a Shakespeare play once) who is perhaps a little melodramatic. This play is the biggest day of his life, and everything rides on the play's success: it is a nerve-wracking and exciting night. He tries his best to keep the show on track while gritting his teeth at the ineptness which surrounds him. Every time someone laughs, he becomes more frustrated at both his fellow actors and the audience. Note: The actor cast in this role will need to be comfortable performing on a seven-foot-high platform with no railing. (RP)

Gender: Male Presenting

JONATHAN: (Plays Charles Haversham in "The Murder at Haversham Manor.")

Poor guy. He's been cast as a corpse but has trouble playing dead. Don't worry — he has some lines as the play

progresses. He's a bad actor but sees himself as very cool. He is excited to be in the show and is having fun. He technically must drive the show; he cares about the play, but not to the same extent as the others; very physical role. Note: The actor cast in this role must be comfortable performing on a seven-foot-high platform with no railing. (RP)

Gender: Male Presenting

SANDRA: (Plays Florence Colleymoore, femme fatale and fiancé of the deceased who is having a secret affair with his brother)

She is a diva and the company's leading lady who thinks she's more talented than she really is. (Or maybe she's not too bright? There's room for interpretation.) Sandra 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. She is smart enough to stay on the good side of someone who can help her (like the director. You know the type - the stakes are high.) Very physical role. (RP)

Gender: Female Presenting

MAX: (Plays Cecil, (a sweet dopey ingenue) brother of the deceased who is having a secret affair with Florence 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 4th wall and engages with the audience; his mistakes are fundamental; he doesn't think anything through, just looks for approval. (RP & Cockney)

Gender: Male Presenting

ROBERT: (Plays Thomas in The Murder at Haversham Manor, the deceased best friend and Florence's brother)

He wants to be Richard Burton (formidable and a bit pompous) with a declamatory acting style. This is the sort of actor who always gets cast as the 'best friend' or 'brother.' Earnest and optimistic, he always believes the show is going much more smoothly than it really is. As a result, he doesn't feel bad when the show goes 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) Note: The actor cast in this role will need to be comfortable performing on a seven-foot-high platform with no railing. (RP)

Gender: Male Presenting

DENNIS [or DENISE]: (Plays Perkins the butler)

Probably the worst actor of the bunch. S/He has no desire to be in theatre, just wants to be liked and make friends — of which he has none. S/He believes if s/he is successful in the show, they will have success socially. Laughter from the audience is agony for him; s/he may be slightly oblivious but understands when he gets things wrong; the laughter is a personal tragedy/failure. S/He has difficulty pronouncing big words and must write a cheat sheet on their sleeve. (RP)

Gender: Male or Female Presenting

ANNIE: (The stage manager)

The stage manager who can generally solve problems quickly. She has the biggest journey of any of the characters. When Sandra must substitute as the leading lady, she goes from nervous to confident then downright competitive; her initial terror turning to joy by the end of the play. She starts small but grows and grows. American dialect.

Gender: Female Presenting

TREVOR [or TINA]: (The play's lighting and sound tech guy)

S/He simply wants to get on with the show; curmudgeonly and doesn't care for actors; s/he is easily distracted, occasionally missing cues or forgetting to turn mic off. S/He does many things he shouldn't, including engaging with the audience; when things go really sideways, he is forced to act in the play; s/he hates acting. Generally, stays backstage until s/he too must substitute as the leading lady. (American dialect)

Gender: Male or Female Presenting