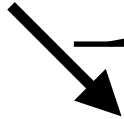


## RS#3 Annie, Chris, Robert, & Dennis

Start



*poles. Max grins at the audience; Robert and Dennis quickly lower him out of view. Max stands up in the window and grins at the audience again. Robert grabs him and pulls him out of sight; Max smacks his head on the edge of the window as he goes.*

ANNIE. Oh Inspector, my fiancé and my lover killed on the same eve.

CHRIS. Remember your breathing, Miss Colley Moore, now is not the time for another of your episodes.

ANNIE. *(Calm.)* I am having an episode, Inspector. I cannot help it.

CHRIS. *(Under his breath.)* Have an episode. Have...an...episode. *(Loudly.)* Have an episode.

*Annie tries to scream and shake as she has seen Sandra do in rehearsals. Vamp. Annie builds the episode bigger and bigger until it reaches a climax and she flops onto the chaise longue.*

No, Miss Colley Moore.

*Robert and Dennis reenter.*

ROBERT. Florence, control yourself girl.

DENNIS. She's having another one of her hysterical episodes.

ANNIE. *(Calmly reads.)* They're dead. They're gone and they're never coming back.

ROBERT. I will not tolerate another tantrum, Florence.

ANNIE. *(Calm.)* Get away from me, Thomas. You don't understand my grief.

ROBERT. That's enough, take one of your pills.

ANNIE. No. Not more pills.

*Annie takes a pill with no hesitation.*

Oh, they're mints.

ROBERT. But who could have killed...

*Annie upstages Robert by sinking back onto the chaise longue, pretending to be knocked out by the pill.*

But who could have killed him?

DENNIS. That's a good question, Mr. Colley Moore.

CHRIS. ...and one we need to answer quickly if we're going to get out of this house alive.

ANNIE. Oh Inspector, you've given me a chill.

CHRIS. Perkins, pour us all another scotch.

DENNIS. Of course, Inspector.

*Dennis pours more white spirit for everyone.*

CHRIS. Now, tell me, is there anyone else that you know of in the grounds other than the four of us?

ANNIE. Not a soul.

ROBERT. The gardener left at six, the only other member of staff is Perkins. *(Drinks and spits out the white spirit.)* Good God, I needed that.

CHRIS. Does anyone have access to the grounds?

ANNIE. No one, Inspector.

DENNIS. I'm the only one with a master key and as instructed I locked and bolted the doors as soon as you arrived.

ROBERT. Then who could have killed him?

DENNIS. That's a good question, Mr. Colleymoore.

CHRIS. ...and one we need to answer quickly if we're going to get out of this house alive.

ANNIE. Oh Inspector, you've given me a chill.

CHRIS. Perkins, pour us all another scotch.

*Chris and Robert start to realise that they have been here before.*

DENNIS. Of course, Inspector.

*Dennis pours white spirit again.*

CHRIS. Now, tell me, is there anyone else that you know of in the grounds other than the four of us?

ANNIE. Not a soul.

ROBERT. The gardener left at six, the only other member of staff is Perkins. *(Drinks. Spits it out again.)* Good God, I needed that.

CHRIS. Does anyone have access to the grounds?

ANNIE. No one, Inspector.

DENNIS. I'm the only one with a master key and as instructed I locked and bolted the doors as soon as you arrived.

ROBERT. (*Pointedly, hoping Dennis will say the correct line this time.*) Then who could have killed him?

*Dennis knows something is wrong but not what, and the loop of dialogue goes around again.*

DENNIS. That's a good question, Mr. Colleymoore.

CHRIS. ...and one we need to answer quickly if we're going to get out of this house alive.

ANNIE. Oh Inspector, you've given me a chill.

CHRIS. Perkins, pour us all another scotch.

DENNIS. Of course, Inspector.

*Dennis pours white spirit again.*

CHRIS. Now, tell me, is there anyone else that you know of in the grounds other than the four of us?

ANNIE. Not a soul.

ROBERT. The gardener left at six, the only other member of staff is Perkins. (*Drinks. Spits.*) Good God, I needed that.

CHRIS. Does anyone have access to the grounds?

ANNIE. No one, Inspector.

DENNIS. I'm the only one with the master key and as instructed I locked and bolted all the doors as soon as you arrived.

ROBERT. *Then who could have killed him?*

*Pause. All look at Dennis.*

DENNIS. That's a good question, Mr. Colleymoore.

*The script loops again. Much faster this time.*

CHRIS. ...and one we need to answer quickly if we're going to get out of this house alive.

ANNIE. Oh Inspector, you've given me a chill!

CHRIS. Perkins, pour us all another scotch.

DENNIS. Of course, Inspector.

*Dennis pours white spirit again.*

CHRIS. Now, tell me, is there anyone else that you know of in the grounds other than the four of us?

ANNIE. Not a soul.

ROBERT. The gardener left at six, the only other member of staff is Perkins. *(Drinks again. Spits out again.)* Good God, I needed that.

CHRIS. Does anyone have access to the grounds?

ANNIE. No one, Inspector.

DENNIS. I'm the only one with a master key and as instructed I locked and bolted the doors as soon as you arrived.

ROBERT. *THEN WHO COULD HAVE KILLED HIM?*

*Pause. Tense, everyone desperate that Dennis will get it right this time.*

DENNIS. That's a good question, Mr. Colleymoore.

ROBERT and CHRIS. *Argh!!*

CHRIS. ...and one we need to answer quickly if we're going to get out of this house alive.

ANNIE. Oh Inspector, you've given me a chill.

CHRIS. Perkins, pour us all another scotch.

DENNIS. Of course, Inspector.

*Dennis pours white spirit again.*

CHRIS. Now, tell me, is there anyone else that you know of in the grounds other than the four of us?

ANNIE. Not a soul.

ROBERT. The gardener left at six, the only other member of staff is Perkins. *(Throws the white spirit in Dennis' face.)* Good God, I needed that!

*Chris throws his white spirit in Dennis' face as well.*

CHRIS. Does anyone have access to the grounds?

ANNIE. No one, Inspector.

DENNIS. *(In pain, the white spirit burning his skin.)* I'm the only one with a master key and as instructed I locked and bolted all the doors as soon as you arrived.

*Chris and Robert grab Dennis.*

ALL. Then who could have killed him?

DENNIS. (*Realises.*) No one! YES! No one could have killed him, except for the people who are in this room.

CHRIS. Good God, you're right, it's one of us.

*All gasp.*

ANNIE. (*Reads.*) This is a disaster! Blackout. Intermission.

*Annie realises her mistake.*

Oh.  **End**

*Blackout. Tabs fly in. Music.*

### **End of Act One**

#### **INTERVAL ACTIVITY:**

*Robert appears in auditorium/foyer in a robe and joins the queue for ice creams. Chris appears and sends him backstage.*