

Crimes at Cartwell
Episode 3

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PROLOGUE INT. CARTWELL MANOR

CHARLOTTE: Aarrgh, a ghost!

WALTER: My god!

VICTORIA: Brian?!

PERRY: Penny!

PENNY: Perry!

GRENVILLE: Come quickly!

SAFFRON: She's dead!

TERRY: Murder!

SCENE 1 – INT. CARTWELL DRAWING ROOM

F/X: SPOOKY SOUNDSCAPE (BUT WITHIN PERIOD, TRIANTA HAS
SOMEHOW CREATED THIS)

TRIANTA: Welcome, welcome, please sit. I need you all to remain calm as we shall shortly be opening a portal to the realms of the dead.

TERRY: You want to be careful those two wolves aren't looking for revenge Walter!

TRIANTA: Please, don't jest. Who knows what a rogue word might call forth?

PENNY: We were in the drawing room of Cartwell Manor which had not been decorated like the rest of the rooms I'd seen so far. Where they had been playfully strewn with obviously fake cobwebs and two-dimensional spiders, the drawing room was genuinely atmospheric.

It was dim, lit only by a few flickering candles which had already burned down low and there was a thickish grey mist drifting about the room from somewhere. The Great Trianta had painted all manner of occult and alchemical symbols onto various surfaces; there was a triangle with a circle inside it daubed on the mirror, a circle with what looked like a pair of horns marked out on the sideboard in salt, and on the large central table was a huge pentagram smeared onto the varnished wood in a deep red colour.

PERRY: Penny, I'm not sure about this. It reminds me of... well it reminds me of something I read which I'd rather not be reminded of actually.

PENNY: It's OK Perry, you're a rational thinker, just think rationally.

PERRY: No, you're right. Of course you are Penny girl, but the rational thinker in me is rationally thinking right now that even though all this is obviously hooey and guff, is it really rational to risk the infinitesimal chance it isn't?

PENNY: The chance it isn't hooey and guff?

PERRY: Exactly.

PENNY: What exactly does hooey and guff mean?

PERRY: Well, you know, hooey means... it means... it's just sort of guff I suppose.

PENNY: And guff is hooey?

PERRY: Now you're getting it.

TRIANTA: Stop whispering over there!

PENNY: At Trianta's scolding Perry almost leapt out of his skin. I felt bad. When I'd accepted the invite, I thought it would be a chance to catch up with my old friend Victoria and spend a bit of time away from the office with Perry. So far, I'd made him wear a costume that made him uncomfortable, immediately broken my promise not to abandon him, and now he was clearly scared witless, with the séance not even properly started yet. But it looked like it was about to.

TRIANTA: I need silence now.

PENNY: Trianta waved her hands over the collection of candles in front of her, the light bouncing off her many bangles and throwing off beams of light at odd angles through the haze. She produced a pipette from somewhere and released three droplets which flared bright green when they hit the flames and produced curls of reddish smoke which framed the mystic's face. I have to give it to her, she was certainly earning the Great in her name with the show, this was clearly not her first-time unsettling England's middle classes. I became aware of a low drone filling the air but couldn't place where it was coming from. Other strange noises started to bleed into the room.

F/X: DRONE, WITH INTERMITTENT ODD NOISES

WALTER: Bloody hell Victoria, what have you signed us up for here?

PENNY: Walter shifted in his seat, clanking slightly as he rearranged his chains. Even though he was trying to laugh it off I could see he was uncomfortable. He reacted like a naughty schoolboy when Trianta admonished him.

TRIANTA: I must have silence!

WALTER: Yes miss, sorry miss.

PENNY: Terry was sat behind Walter and I could see him struggling to stifle a laugh, but the rest of the faces in the room were absolutely rapt with attention. The strange glow Trianta had summoned from the candles made everyone's faces green, so that they looked like expectant goblins awaiting instruction from their orc overlord. The séance was about to begin.

SCENE 2 – INT. CARTWELL DRAWING ROOM

F/X: SPOOKY DRONE AND ODD NOISES

TRIANTA: I am the Great Trianta! Tonight, we will commune with souls from another plane, creatures no longer of this world. I doth not know to whom we will speak, or what spirit the ritual I hereby perform will draw forth. But we should be prepared for all eventualities. I have long wished to investigate Cartwell Manor, stories have circulated in my community about strange goings on and a malevolent presence that doth haunt these grounds. It is not my intention to put any of us here assembled in danger, but it is of the utmost importance that you heed my instructions.

PENNY: I thought she was laying on the language a bit thick, there were so many doths and 'eds I doth get a bit distracted. But then she produced another flash of green flame, this time I didn't spot the pipette, and in her hands, as if by magic, was a length of golden rope.

F/X: FLARE OF FLAME

TERRY: Whizzo, that was some trick! Now are you going to do the one where you cut it in half, tie it back together and remove the knot?

VICTORIA: Terry!

PENNY: Victoria was sat next to her brother and gave him a whack around the back of the head.

VICTORIA: I apologise for my brother Trianta, he'll be quiet from now on.

TERRY: Jesus, Vicky, I was just lightening the mood. You damn near knocked me out cold.

VICTORIA: The mood doesn't need lightening Terry, The Great Trianta is about to call forth a spirit from beyond the grave. It's heavy stuff.

TERRY: OK, OK, I'm sorry.

PENNY: Victoria was so serious in telling off her brother I wondered for a moment if perhaps she had bought in to the whole thing and was maybe secretly hoping to speak with Brian one more time, but I reasoned she was just being a good host and as an older sister never missed an opportunity to give her brother a thwack when he deserved one.

TERRY: Please, continue Trianta.

TRIANTA: *Clears throat*

TERRY: The Great Trianta.

TRIANTA: I need you to listen carefully to the next thing I sayeth.

PENNY: Sayeth?!

TRIANTA: You must pass this golden cord from person to person until it winds its way from my left hand to everyone in the room and back to my right hand. Once you have passed it on, you must not break contact with the cord. This unbroken link will keep whatever is brought forth bound by my incantation.

PENNY: Trianta held up the cord in her palms with great reverence. Her amber eyes were two huge pools of evening sunlight as she stared at us over her raised hands.

TRIANTA: Do you all understand that which I doth ask?

PENNY: All the little green faces nodded.

TRIANTA: You must say I understand aloud.

PENNY: I went first, followed by Victoria.

I understand.

VICTORIA: I understand.

TERRY: I understand.

CHARLOTTE: I understand.

WALTER: I understand.

SAFFRON: I understand.

PENNY: When it came to Perry, he paused and actually raised his hand.

TRIANTA: Yes?

PERRY: Well, um... I'm not sure I do understand. The cord is a solid object and so regardless of whether we are touching it or not the perimeter will be an unbroken link.

PENNY: I was quite proud of Perry, even though he was definitely a bit spooked by the whole thing he hadn't entirely left logic behind. The Great Trianta

received this query better than I thought she might. She nodded sagely, as if she had been expecting this very question.

TRIANTA: Ah yes, but the cord on its own is nothing. It is just a cord. It is our shared focus and energy combined with the powerful words I will speak that imbue it with great power. Do you see?

PERRY: Sort of like batteries putting energy into a closed circuit?

TRIANTA: If you like.

PERRY: Then I understand.

PENNY: With Perry's brief digression into electro-physics dealt with, Trianta handed one end of the cord to me and I passed it along to Victoria and so on. Until it reached Perry who handed it back to Trianta keeping such a firm grip on his section that, even in the dim light of the misty room, I saw his knuckles turn white.

F/X: DRONE SHIFTS TONE/CHANGES

PENNY: The noise of the drone shifted as The Great Trianta drew in a deep breath and began chanting.

TRIANTA: Ging Dire, Dray Eff, Leow Tsew, Rurr Ffuha, Ging Dire, Dray Eff, Leow Tsew, Rurr Ffuha.

PENNY: A chill breeze came through the window, guttering the candles which did well to stay alight and sending a murmur through the group. But the mystic leading us kept on chanting.

TRIANTA: Ging Dire, Dray Eff, Leow Tsew, Rurr Ffuha, Ging Dire, Dray Eff, Leow Tsew, Rurr Ffuha.

PENNY: Then there was a loud crash from somewhere else in the Manor.

F/X: CRASH, LIKE SOMEONE/SOMETHING FALLING OVER UPSTAIRS

PENNY: Which was followed by a scream from Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: Aagrh!

PERRY: Penny! Penny, what's happening?!

PENNY: I didn't have time to answer Perry because Trianta had stopped chanting.

TRIANTA: What was that noise?

PERRY: You've let go of the cord Trianta! The cord!

CHARLOTTE: We're doomed!

PENNY: Perry & Charlotte were both increasing the panic of the other. I was actually a little grateful to Walter who stood up and took control of the situation.

WALTER: Now look here, just pull yourselves together. Charlotte, you've been flighty since you were just a girl, but Pink you're new and need to put a better face on it. Madame Trianta, is this your doing? I think you've gone a bit far.

TRIANTA: I didn't do anything, I've not finished the incantation so nothing could have crossed over. That's why it was OK for me to let go of the cord.

TERRY: Yeah, that's why!

VICTORIA: Terry, don't mock! Well, if that crash wasn't part of the show, we should find out what it was. Grenville!

PENNY: The door swung open and Grenville stepped through.

GRENVILLE: Yes ma'am?

VICTORIA: Did you hear a noise from upstairs?

GRENVILLE: Yes ma'am, I assumed it was some sort of effect ma'am. Like the gramophone I helped Ms Trianta hide underneath the table to play that godawful droning record.

TRIANTA: Secret gramophone Grenville! But that crash had nothing to do with me.

TERRY: Well, let's go see what it was huh? Each man take a room?

WALTER: Shouldn't we be in pairs?

TERRY: What's the matter Walter? Scared?

WALTER: I'll give you scared you upstart yank.

PENNY: I actually think Walter is right, pairs is a good idea. But not just the men, let's all go. It'll save time and we can carry on afterwards.

CHARLOTTE: I'm not going searching with a woman, I want a man by my side.

WALTER: I'll accompany you Charlotte, we'll take the rooms in the East Wing.

SAFFRON: Thanks Walter dear.

VICTORIA: Don't worry Saffron. We can search together if you'd like?

SAFFRON: OK, we'll take the bedrooms.

PERRY: I think Penny & I will take ground floor, Penny?

PENNY: Works for me.

TERRY: OK, well looks like you and I are searching the West Wing then Grenville.

TRIANTA: What about me? I'm not staying here.

TERRY: You can't be scared surely!

TRIANTA: I'm respectful of whatever I bring forth, not scared, but I didn't bring anything forth. That's what I'm telling you.

GRENVILLE: Mr Warner, why don't you accompany Ms Trianta to search the East Wing, and Minnie you'll come with me and take the service stairs up to the working quarters?

MINNIE: Yes sir.

PERRY: Ah! Where did she come from?

PENNY: Minnie the maid had popped up behind all of us and was stood near the windows.

MINNIE: I was waiting behind the service door, like Ms Trianta told me so that I could...

PENNY: Trianta cut her off.

TRIANTA: They don't need to know thank you Minnie, it's bad enough Grenville let slip about my gramophone which is supposed to be a secret!

GRENVILLE: Sorry ma'am.

VICTORIA: I promise no one from Cartwell is going to spill the beans on your trade secrets Trianta. Now, if we're all assigned, shall we get on?

SCENE 3 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR, GARDEN ROOM

F/X: QUIET OLD HOUSE NOISES, CREAKY FLOORBOARDS ETC.

PENNY: Leaving behind the low-level pyrotechnics and Trianta's drone record of the drawing room, the rest of the house was peaceful. Or, as Perry put it.

PERRY: It's quite Penny girl. Too quiet.

PENNY: I don't think it's too quiet Perry, it's just quiet. That's all.

F/X: PENNY OPENS A DOOR

PENNY: Let's look in here.

I opened a door which led to a garden room. It was freezing, one of the windows was open and the curtain was flapping in the breeze. Then...

F/X: BIRD FLAPPING

PERRY: Argh!

PENNY: Something erupted from the shadows.

PERRY: Argh! Penny, save yourself, I'll hold it off while you escape. Argh! it's attacking me. A shadow creature is attacking me!

PENNY: I was touched by Perry putting himself in the line of fire but wasn't leaving him. I reached out and turned on the light, which instantly showed the shadow creature to be a startled crow which must have flown in the open window and was now panicking.

It's just a crow Perry. Here.

I whipped a rug off the back of one the easy chairs.

Use this to grab it and throw it out the window.

PERRY: Good thinking. Come here little birdy... Argh! No, just calm down... just argh! There, got it, now off you fly.

F/X: BIRD FLAPS AWAY INTO THE NIGHT

PENNY: After a brief wrestling match with the corvid, Perry had prevailed and stood with his back to me, looking out at the dark garden, panting slightly.

PERRY: Do you think that was the sound we heard then?

PENNY: No, there isn't anything in here that looks obviously knocked over. Besides I thought it came from the stairs.

PERRY: Yes, I think you're right.

PENNY: Perry turned back to me and I could see blood streaming down his exposed chest.

Perry! You're bleeding!

PERRY: Am I? Oh gosh I am. I'm not very good with blood.

F/X: PERRY ALMOST THROWS UP

PENNY: No emesis Perry, we're indoors. Stay strong.

PERRY: Will do!

PENNY: Now come here and let me take a look.

I whipped out a small handkerchief and dabbed at the marks on his chest.

PERRY: Ah... oooh...

PENNY: You're fine, it's just a bit of scratch that's all.

PERRY: Do you think I'll need to get an injection?

PENNY: No, I wouldn't have thought so.

PERRY: Good.

F/X: PAUSE, MAYBE HEAR THE WIND OUTSIDE OR AN OWL

PENNY: There was nothing more to wipe away from Perry's chest, but I'd ended up resting my hand against his bare skin. I looked up at him and he looked down at me, his strong nose picked out by the moonlight. We stayed like that for what seemed an age, both of us not doing anything, but also not not doing anything.

Eventually Perry stammered something out.

PERRY: Well... we should probably... um... go and see how the others got on?

PENNY: Yes, yes, you're right.

PERRY: Maybe I'll just swing by my room and put on a shirt though. Cover up the scratches. Plus, I was getting a bit cold.

PENNY: Yes, I can imagine it was a bit nipple. I mean nippy, chilly, you know?. Don't know why I said nipple. Over indulged on the cocktails maybe. The tipple caused the nipple! Am I rambling Perry? I think I'm rambling. Probably releasing the adrenaline from the bird encounter I'd say, wouldn't you? Yes, sure you would. Stopping now. Stopped.

Perry tilted his head to one side and smiled at me.

PERRY: That was very impressive Penny girl, you sounded like me when I get flustered.

PENNY: Did I? Spending too much time together maybe.

PERRY: Yes, maybe that's it.

PENNY: Come on then, let's get you a shirt.

I was so flustered I forgot to close the window as we left. On our way to the stairs we poked our heads in to the other rooms, being sure to flick the lights on before we stepped fully inside, but didn't find anything.

SCENE 4 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

F/X: MAYBE A GRANDFATHER CLOCK?

PENNY: When we got upstairs Perry hurried off to his room to grab a shirt and I loitered in the hallway. What was going on between me & Mr Pink? I think, if I was really honest with myself, maybe more than I wanted to admit. But was I imagining it? Did he feel the same way?

As I was pacing back and forth, fixating on my non-existent love-life like some soppy teenager. I heard something as I passed one of the doors which had been left ajar.

Hello?

I said as I gave the door a little push.

F/X: DOOR SWINGS OPEN, QUICK RUSTLING OF CLOTHES

VICTORIA: Oh Penny! What are you doing up here? I thought Saffron & I were checking the bedrooms, weren't you scoping out downstairs with that hunky man of yours?

PENNY: Hunky Perry? He's not exactly hunky.

SAFFRON: I think he looks very nice.

VICTORIA: Absolutely, go you Penny!

PENNY: We're not, at least I don't think we are. I don't really know what we are.

VICTORIA: Well fingers crossed you know by the end of the weekend, hey? Where is he anyway?

PENNY: He's just putting on a shirt.

VICTORIA: What a shame. Why would he want to cover up and take away our eye candy?

SAFFRON: Victoria! Penny obviously likes him!

VICTORIA: I'm not going to get in her way, but I can look.

PENNY: He got attacked by a crow.

SAFFRON: A crow?

PENNY: Yes, one of the windows was open in the garden room and a crow got in.

VICTORIA: Wow. Do you think that was the noise we all heard?

PENNY: Not really. Did you two hear something in here? Is that why you were doing... actually what were you doing?

VICTORIA: We didn't find anything. I was just helping Saffron adjust her costume.

SAFFRON: I can't see how Victorian's ever got anything done wearing all this. I can barely move. Normally I like to be more free, I walk barefoot when I can Penny. Keeps me in touch with nature.

PENNY: I see.

PERRY: *[OFF]* Penny? Where are you?

PENNY: Ah, there's Perry. We should probably all go back to the drawing room right?

VICTORIA: Yes lets. I don't know about you, but I thought that The Great Trianta was putting on a great show. All nonsense of course, but entertaining.

SAFFRON: You shouldn't dismiss it so quickly Vic, there are powerful forces we don't understand.

SCENE 5 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR DRAWING ROOM

F/X: THE DRONE AGAIN

PENNY: We all filed back into the drawing room. No one had anything to report, so the general consensus was it must have been the bird we heard. I wasn't convinced but didn't have any better solutions so went with the flow.

Grenville & Minnie circulated with another round of cocktails, these ones were a take on a Rusty Nail renamed Nail in the Coffin. They were every bit as strong as the Bloody Hell Mary's, I thought to myself that tomorrow morning was going to see some sore heads and aching bodies, but I had no idea how right I was.

TRIANTA: Ging Dire, Dray Eff, Leow Tsew, Rurr Ffuha, Ging Dire, Dray Eff, Leow Tsew, Rurr Ffuha.

PENNY: Trianta had handed the rope back out and started chanting away. The combination of the booze, the reveal of the hidden gramophone and the increasing lateness had settled the group, we were much more subdued this second time around. Or we were until.

F/X: DOOR BURSTS OPEN, WEIRD 'GLOWING' NOISE (IS THAT POSSIBLE),
CHAIRS SCATTER, ANOTHER DOOR OPENS PEOPLE SCRAMBLE TO
LEAVE

TRIANTA: Help!

CHARLOTTE: Aarrgh, a ghost!

WALTER: My god!

VICTORIA: Brian?!

TERRY: Jesus Christ that's a scary trick!

SAFFRON: Argh!

PERRY: Penny!

PENNY: Through the rear service door, what I can only describe as an apparition had appeared. It was tall, covered in rags and was giving off a pinky-blue glow that illuminated a few inches all around it. It was one of the most terrifying things I have ever seen, and I joined the mass exit from the room, determined to get as far away from the thing as I could. I was petrified, but the weekend was only going to get more scary from here.