

Crimes at Cartwell  
Episode 5

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SCENE 1 INT. CARTWELL MANOR, PENNY'S ROOM

F/X: PENNY LEAVES THE DRAWING ROOM AND GOES UPSTAIRS

PENNY: Immediately after we found Victoria Cartwell's body I needed to take a minute to get everything straight in my head. I'd been involved in murder cases before, just this summer Perry & I had been at the heart of catching Wendy Weaver the Wombledon Woman of Death. But this was different, I knew Victoria, I'd known her for years. We were classmates and shared important moments growing up together. She was a friend.

F/X: PENNY CLOSSES HER DOOR BEHIND HER AND UNWRAPS A PARCEL

I left the scene and returned to my room in a daze. When I got there I noticed a parcel wrapped in brown paper on the bureau, I opened it and found inside a beautiful new notebook. On the inside leaf was a handwritten note.

VICTORIA: My dear Penny,

Thank you for being here this weekend. A little gift from me to you, for you to collect all those important details from the cases you work with your man, who you claim isn't your man. You can't fool me Penny, I can hear it in your voice when you talk about him. Take a risk, because believe me, life is too short.

With love

Victoria

PENNY: My breath caught in my throat and my eyes stung with tears. I knew Victoria was talking about her time with Brian when she wrote this note, but now I couldn't help but wonder if perhaps she knew on some level that this weekend was going to be a goodbye not just to Cartwell Manor, which she planned to sell, but to everything.

F/X: KNOCK AT THE DOOR

PERRY: Penny girl? Are you OK? Stupid question. Shall I come in?

PENNY: Yes please.

F/X: DOOR OPENS PERRY SITS ON BED NEXT TO PENNY

PENNY: Perry entered the room slowly, like I was a trapped bird he didn't want to startle into flight. He gently sat himself next to me on the bed and looked at me, his blue eyes filled with concern.

PERRY: It's just awful Penny girl, awful. How are you feeling?

PENNY: Shocked, obviously. Sad too. But mainly Perry I'm angry, I am really, really angry.

PERRY: OK, yes. Of course.

PENNY: Whoever did that is going to pay.

PERRY: They will.

PENNY: And we're going to find them.

PERRY: Oh, I'm not sure about that. Might we not be too close to it? I mean, we'll probably be suspects Penny.

PENNY: Perry! I am going to solve this case and I am going to catch whoever did that to my friend. You can either help me or you can leave me alone. Forever.

PERRY: No, I'll help, I'll help.

PENNY: Good. Let's start by putting down everything we know so far. Here, you write.

PERRY: Am I? Right about what?

PENNY: You write Perry, not you're right.

PERRY: Ah, I was wrong then.

PENNY: I appreciated him trying to lighten the mood, but couldn't manage more than a weak smile. I handed him the notebook, with the first page turned over of course, and together we got down all the things we could think of which might be relevant.

PERRY: Shall I review what we've got?

PENNY: Yes please.

PERRY: OK. A few weeks ago you received an invite to spend Halloween weekend here at Cartwell Manor. The invite was formal, written by Grenville the butler, but there was also a personal note from Victoria asking you to come and support her.

She needed your support because this weekend she was going to announce she was selling Cartwell Manor, the family home of her husband Brian Cartwell who died after a lightning strike here on the grounds.

Upon arrival we met the other guests: Walter Herbertson-Jones, who grew up with Brian Cartwell, his wife Saffron. Terry Warner, Victoria's brother, who you kissed once.

PENNY: Is that relevant?

PERRY: I don't know Penny, it might be. You kissed him so he could impress Charlotte Blakemore another old friend of Brian Cartwell's, also in attendance.

PENNY: Terry's crush.

PERRY: Right. Finally we have The Great Trianta, a medium/ghost hunter who apparently begged Victoria to let her provide entertainment here because she wanted to investigate the rumours surrounding paranormal activity at Cartwell Manor.

PENNY: Plus the staff, Grenville, the butler who has been here for years.

PERRY: Who saw you sliding down bannisters.

PENNY: And a relatively new maid called Minnie. I think that just about sums up our list of who was here, and therefore they are our suspects.

PERRY: I suppose so. Shortly after arrival, drinks were served.

PENNY: Very strong drinks.

PERRY: And a costume parade took place before we began a séance led by The Great Trianta. The séance was interrupted by a noise which is believed to have been caused by a bird we found, which presumably made its entrance via an open window.

PENNY: Ah yes, the open window. I'd forgotten about that. The noise didn't sound like a bird flapping either, more like something falling over.

PERRY: The whole place was searched though Penny, and I'm only noting down what we know for sure. The séance resumed.

PENNY: After more strong cocktails.

PERRY: At which point a figure appeared.

PENNY: You've written figure, not ghost?

PERRY: Absolutely Penny girl. I don't think I could bring myself to write ghost.

PENNY: But you have to admit, most people would say it looked like a ghost. In fact some are saying it was the ghost of Brian Cartwell.

PERRY: I'll add that the figure had a ghostly appearance, glowing a blue-ish, pinky colour and seemingly hovering six-inches from the floor. The ghostly figure then proceeded to assault The Great Trianta and overturn a table, at which point all the guests.

PENNY: Suspects.

PERRY: Suspects fled the room, ourselves included. We can't be totally sure of anyone's whereabouts for the next fifteen, to twenty minutes, until a group of us; Saffron, Terry, Grenville, Trianta, and us, made the fateful discovery of Victoria Cartwell.

PENNY: Stabbed to death in the parlour. Oh Victoria!

SCENE 2 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR

F/X: KNOCK ON DOOR

PENNY: Hello? Who is it?

GRENVILLE: It's Grenville ma'am, I'm making the rounds to see if everyone else is accounted for and if myself or Minnie can fetch anyone a drink?

PENNY: I should think we've all had enough to drink, wouldn't you?

GRENVILLE: Not for me to comment ma'am, but there is coffee available as well as anything stiffer if you'd prefer.

PENNY: We're fine thank you Grenville.

GRENVILLE: We ma'am? Is Mr Pink with you?

PERRY: I'm here Grenville, just keeping Ms Pink company. Safety and numbers and all that.

GRENVILLE: May I open the door?

PENNY: Yes, of course sorry Grenville, please come in.

F/X: DOOR OPENS, GRENVILLE ENTERS

GRENVILLE: Thank you.

PENNY: The poor old retainer looked terrible. His face was ashen, and his hands trembled slightly. He ran one frantically through his hair, which was normally combed into tight furrows with military precision, but currently had curled tendrils of chestnut brown branching out in all directions.

Oh Grenville, you look awful. Take a seat.

GRENVILLE: No ma'am, thank you I won't. I've a job to do still. It was a shock, seeing Mrs Cartwell so... well... you know...

PERRY: Is dead the word you're after?

PENNY: Perry!

PERRY: Sorry, Penny girl, I was genuinely trying to help.

PENNY: Well don't.

GRENVILLE: But... um... I'm a butler, so I must carry on. I serve my master, mistress, and while her guests are still at Cartwell, well, I will jolly well serve them.

PENNY: He pulled out a hipflask and offered it to Perry & I.

GRENVILLE: Care for a nip? No? Well as it's out, I'll just take the edge off.

PENNY: Grenville, I think perhaps you should go and have a lie down in your room until the police arrive.

GRENVILLE: That's just it ma'am, the police aren't going to arrive I'm afraid.

PERRY: What? Why not?

GRENVILLE: Well sir, I've not been able to reach them. The phonelines are down.

PERRY: First the electricity and now the phones, you would have thought with all the money from Cartwell Haircare this place would have been better equipped!

GRENVILLE: But it is, all the finest engineering available. Nothing like this has ever happened before.

PENNY: It must have been the storm.

GRENVILLE: What storm ma'am?

PENNY: There was a great long rumble of thunder after the... thing appeared, before we found...

I allowed myself to trail off, but Perry finished my sentence for me.

PERRY: Victoria's murdered body.

PENNY: Perry!

PERRY: Sorry Penny, again thought it was helpful.

PENNY: It wasn't.

GRENVILLE: Given what has happened with...

F/X: MUTED PUNCH NOISE

PENNY: Perry opened his mouth to 'help' again, and I gave him a quick dig to the ribs.

PERRY: Oof! Quite right.

GRENVILLE: Some of the other guests have expressed some understandable fears, and it has been requested we all come together in the Great Hall to see out the night as one.

PERRY: I see.

GRENVILLE: As I say, Minnie & I have made sure there is coffee and other refreshments available.

PENNY: He pulled again on his hipflask.

GRENVILLE: So, we'll all be quite comfortable. As comfortable as we can be, given the lamentable tragedy of Mrs Cartwell's death.

PERRY: Grenville!

PENNY: He can say it Perry! We'll be right down Grenville.



SCENE 3 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR, GREAT HALL

F/X: GENERAL HUBBUB

PENNY: The scene in the Great Hall was bizarre, most people were still wearing their costumes, only Grenville, Charlotte and Saffron had changed, but the joy and excitement had been replaced by shock and fear. Glass-eyed people sat cradling steaming mugs of coffee and hot-chocolate, it looked like a cross between a refugee camp and a holding pen for Hollywood extras.

When I walked in Terry came straight over and threw his arms around me. After a brief chat in which neither of us really said anything, he collapsed back into his chair and said.

TERRY: Sweet Jesus Penny, what is going on?

PENNY: I don't know Terry, but I plan on finding out.

TERRY: How do you mean?

PENNY: I realised, with a hint of damaged pride, Terry didn't know what Perry & I did for a living. I wondered for a moment whether I should keep our profession a secret and conduct my investigation in private. But I reasoned that knowing experienced detectives were already on the scene might provide some solace. Plus, if I'm honest, I'm very proud of what Perry & I have achieved for the P. Pink Detective Agency, so maybe I was showing off a little.

Perry and I are detectives.

I told him.

We've solved murders before and brought killers to justice and you had better believe we are going to find out who hurt your sister. We aren't going to rest until they are behind bars are we Perry?

[PAUSE]

Perry?

F/X: PERRY SNORES

PENNY: I turned and saw that while I'd been chatting to Terry, Perry had settled himself into an armchair and drifted off. I kicked him in the shin.

Perry!

F/X: KICK

PERRY: Argh! I'm up, I'm up. Sorry, the cocktails caught up with me. I don't drink often. I wasn't actually sleeping, just pretending.

PENNY: I was just telling Terry here we won't rest until we find Victoria's killer.

PERRY: Oh gosh, did you use those words and then it looked like I was literally asleep just behind you? I am sorry.

PENNY: It's fine, just don't do it again.

PERRY: Absolutely.

PENNY: So Terr-

PERRY: Sorry to interrupt, but when you say don't do it again do you mean be asleep behind you as you're telling someone we won't rest?

PENNY: Yes.

PERRY: Right. Thought so.

PENNY: So Terry-

PERRY: The thing is, if I'm asleep I won't know you're telling someone we won't rest will I? Because I'll be asleep. You're not telling me not to sleep ever again are you Penny? I couldn't go without sleep for longer than 48 hours max, I have read about certain tribal rituals where the participant goes a full week without sleep, but they start hallucinating and all sorts.

PENNY: Perry.

PERRY: Yup, absolutely. Sorry. Sorry Terry. The point is we will not rest, more than is required, until we have solved this case.

TERRY: That's great news, thanks Penny. I feel better knowing somebody who knew Victoria is on the case. If you want my advice, you'll start with Walter. He's never really warmed to Vic, and I can't imagine her and Saffron's antics made him like her any more.

PENNY: Antics? Did they regularly pull pranks on him like the apple bobbing? I saw them exchange a look.

TERRY: Oh, you don't know? I assumed Vic would have told you. Ah... er... OK, if you're going to be investigating this you'll need to know the facts I suppose. My sister loved Saffron.

PENNY: OK.

TERRY: No, she really loved Saffron.

PERRY: Do you mean the spice?

TERRY: No, I mean Saffron the person, the woman. They were IN love, with each other, and all that that entails.

PERRY: But they're both women?

PENNY: Perry.

PERRY: Oh, I see. Sapphic.

TERRY: No, Saffron.

PERRY: What? Oh yes, no, Sapphic means romantic love between two women.

PENNY: Are you sure?

PERRY: Definitely, it's in the dictionary.

PENNY: I was talking to Terry.

TERRY: Vic told me.

PENNY: And you're saying Walter knows his wife was being unfaithful to him?

TERRY: I don't know if he knew or not, but they've been getting less and less concerned about hiding it.

PENNY: Oh gosh, I've just realised I interrupted them earlier. They were in Saffron's room and...

TERRY: Hey look, I loved my sister and I supported whatever made her happy, but I don't need to hear a description of it any more than I would want to know what she and Brian used to get up to you know?

PENNY: Sorry, yes. Well then Perry, I think we should find a quiet spot and have a chat with Walter don't you?

TERRY: You're going to do it now?

PENNY: No time like the present. Besides, if we wait until morning the phonelines might be back up and then the police will barge in and we'll be relegated to witnesses.

PERRY: Or suspects.

PENNY: Exactly. No, we're going to have a little chat with Walter right now.

PERRY: Last time we saw him Penny he was passed out drunk.

PENNY: He appeared to be, and if he was it'll mean he's all softened up for our interview. But he might have been pretending, he did have two swords remember.

PERRY: If it was an act, it was pretty convincing.

PENNY: Yes, like your fake sleeping a moment ago.

SCENE 4 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR, DRAWING ROOM

F/X: FIRE CRACKLING

PENNY: I talked Grenville into lighting a fire in the Drawing Room and letting me use it to speak with a few people privately. Walter grudgingly agreed to chat with me.

WALTER: What's so important that you couldn't speak to me in the Great Hall with the others then?

PENNY: Walter's long blonde hair was unkempt, and his jaw was stippled with a rusty fuzz. He took a seat across from me warily, and Perry insisted on sitting behind him next to the door. I tried to persuade him to sit alongside me, but he was convinced his silent presence would intimidate the witnesses. I didn't know that we necessarily wanted them intimidated, but I also didn't think Perry was particularly intimidating and I liked having him in my eyeline so let it go. I tried to start the interview.

I wanted to talk about Victoria and –

WALTER: And what happened to her? Of course. It is barbaric, brutal, and bloody disgusting.

PENNY: I couldn't agree more. But I want to talk about Victoria and Sa-

WALTER: Sacrilege? I wasn't a huge fan of all that occult nonsense, but I don't believe this was a case of a vengeful god smiting her. It was a human, I don't know what that bloody thing was, but I'll lay odds it was a fellow not fiend that did the deed.

PENNY: Again I agree with you, but please let me finish Mr Herbertson-Jones. I want to talk about the relationship between Victoria and Saff-

WALTER: Safari? I don't think he's ever been on safari!

PENNY: Walter! I think you know what I'm asking about. Please tell me what you can about Victoria and Saff-

WALTER: Sapphire? Safranin? Safe-crackers?

PENNY: Saffron, Walter! You're wife Saffron. The fact you are so obviously trying to avoid talking about it tells me you knew about them. When did you find out?

WALTER: I didn't find anything out. I don't know what you're talking about. My wife is not a lesbian, she's married!

PENNY: Walter, I never said she was a lesbian. I just said I wanted to talk about her with Victoria.

WALTER: What? What do you want to know? It's bloody disgusting! It's a sin, and if it's not a sin, adultery bloody is! How bloody dare she! How dare either of them! It could ruin all of us.

PENNY: You don't consider the risks when you're in love.

WALTER: They aren't in love, they are just silly girls playing around. I don't know why they didn't get all this out of the way at school like the rest of us! Not that I... anyway... they are not in love.

PENNY: Were.

WALTER: What?

PENNY: They were in love. Victoria is dead Walter. One of my oldest friends was brutally murdered, the sort of crime often associated with a passionate outburst. Like a cuckolded husband for example...

WALTER: How bloody dare you! I don't know what you think of me, and frankly I don't care. But I'll tell you this, whatever your feelings towards your friend Victoria, I had feelings every bit as strong if not stronger for Brian. We were brothers in arms together, we fought a war together, do you understand that? We swore to protect one another and what was dear to each of us come what may, the end of the war didn't change that one bit. I would as soon hurt Victoria as I would myself. Leave me alone.

PENNY: I'm sorry Walter, you swore to protect Victoria, you failed. I have sworn to find her killer and I will not.

WALTER: If you want to find the killer, I'd take another look at that bloody mystic. She was right at the centre of all it, she 'summoned' that bloody thing, which was probably another trick of hers like the hidden gramophone! I'm going back to the Hall to be with my wife. Good night Ms Pink.

PENNY: He stood up, scratched at his stubble as though considering adding something else, but said nothing and simply bowed stiffly, turned on his heel and left.

I asked Perry to go and ask The Great Trianta to join us. He leapt up, eager to be of service and escorted her into the room. She took the same seat that Walter had just vacated and placed her hands in her lap. As she did so I noticed a slight tremble.

Are you nervous Trianta? Do I call you Trianta?

TRIANTA: Um...

PENNY: The confidence and poise of her earlier performance was gone, the fire in her amber eyes had sputtered and extinguished. What sat before me now was a small, frightened woman.

TRIANTA: My name's Rosie. Rosie Sessler. You might as well know now, as soon as the police arrive I'll have to tell them.

PENNY: Over Rosie's shoulder I saw Perry raise his hand and jiggle on his seat like a schoolboy desperate to be called to answer the question.

Yes Perry? What's wrong?

PERRY: Can I ask Mrs Sessler a question Penny?

PENNY: Of course you can Perry, if you don't mind Rosie?

ROSIE: No, I'll answer anything at all that might help. I feel awful.

PERRY: Does the name Daniel mean anything to you?

ROSIE: He's my husband, how do you know that? Have you got the gift?

PERRY: It just felt a little coincidental hearing the name Sessler here at Cartwell Manor, home of Cartwell Haircare.

PENNY: Sorry Perry, what are you talking about?

PERRY: Daniel Sessler is the Managing Director of Sizzling Sessler Coiffure, Cartwell Haircare's main rival.

PENNY: How on earth do you know that?

PERRY: I read a fascinating article all about the manufacture of shampoo, do you know that-

PENNY: That's my fault Perry, I shouldn't have asked.

I waved Perry quiet and focussed my attention on Rosie.

Do you mean to tell me the wife of Victoria's major business rival begged her way into Victoria's house under false pretences on the very night she was murdered?

ROSIE: No! But sort of yes.

PENNY: I think you better explain.

ROSIE: I am Rosie Sessler, but I'm also the Great Trianta, and I really have heard incredible stories about paranormal activity here. I promise you, my being here has nothing to do with the competition between my husband and Victoria.

PENNY: She had tears rimming her eyes, like a sunset over the ocean, and I was inclined to believe her. But just at that moment Grenville flung open the door.

F/X: DOOR CRASHES OPEN

PERRY: Ow!

PENNY: That's why you shouldn't sit behind doors!

GRENVILLE: Sorry sir, but I needed to speak to you right away. I went down to the cellar to collect some more whiskey, for the guests, and guess who I found down there?

PENNY: Daniel Sessler!

GRENVILLE: Daniel Sessler!

ROSIE: My Daniel?

PERRY: My nose!