

Crimes at Cartwell
Episode 7

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SCENE 1 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR, GREAT HALL

PENNY: Perry's discovery that the long-dead Brian Cartwell had an identical twin which I knew nothing about certainly changed things. It offered a less fantastical solution for how an apparition with Brian's face had appeared moments before his wife was brutally murdered. I immediately buttonholed Grenville who had been with the Cartwell family for as long as anyone, to try and find out answers.

GRENVILLE: Cranston? Blimey, I've not thought of that name for years. Of course I remember him, I watched him grow up. He, Brian, and Walter were thick as thieves.

PENNY: What happened? I feel like I would have remembered an identical twin at the wedding.

GRENVILLE: Oh Cartwell was long gone before Brian met Victoria.

PENNY: Is he dead?

GRENVILLE: Yes, hit by lightning.

PERRY: I thought it didn't strike twice?

GRENVILLE: It doesn't.

PERRY: But two identical twins suffering identical lightning deaths must have pretty long odds.

GRENVILLE: Cranston was hit by lightning?

PERRY: Wasn't he?

GRENVILLE: How would I know?

PERRY: You just said he was!

GRENVILLE: I didn't. I said Brian was.

PENNY: So is Cranston dead as well?

GRENVILLE: Not that I know of, mind you I wouldn't know if he was. I've not heard so much as a peep from him since he bossed off to wherever it is he went.

PENNY: So he could be alive? It could have been him who burst in earlier?

GRENVILLE: What are you talking about?

PENNY: Charlotte & Terry both said they thought the apparition, the ghost, the whatever, looked like Brian.

GRENVILLE: Well they must be yampy, never in a rain of pigs' pudding were that thing a Cartwell lad. I practically raised the both of 'em from babbers, and whatever that thing were it weren't them.

PENNY: OK, but just supposing it was Cranston.

GRENVILLE: It wasn't.

PENNY: But if it was Cranston, would he have any reason to want Victoria dead?

GRENVILLE: Well I suppose he'd inherit the lot; the manor, the land, Cartwell Haircare.

PENNY: He'd inherit everything?

GRENVILLE: Everything. The boys' father, Jesse Cartwell, wrote a pretty strict inheritance plan that passed the whole thing to Brian, then his surviving spouse and kids, but after that it would revert to Cranston and his family, if he had any.

PENNY: That sounds like a pretty good motive to me. Perry?

PERRY: I still don't know exactly what happened to Cranston.

GRENVILLE: It was the war. When it came, all three of them were champing to get at the Krauts. Walter was the ringleader, he had it all mapped out. They'd sign up together, like the Pals Battalions first time around, and fight their way across Europe. Plan was they'd be the three musketeers but with Enfields not rapiers.

PENNY: But then Cranston joined the RAF.

GRENVILLE: Bang on.

PERRY: Why would he abandon his brother and friend?

GRENVILLE: Same reason men have been acting half-soaked since time began. He heard the girls liked the airmen more and he followed the orders from the commanding officer beneath his belt. Walter hit the roof when he found out, remember I told you he had a temper but picked his battles? Well, Cranston was stood there with a face as long as Livery Street looking like he were fair about to start blarneying, so of course that's when Walter lumps him.

PENNY: He hit him?

GRENVILLE: Just plants one on him and doesn't stop. Cranston is feeling smaller than a gnat's nut already and figures he deserves it. But Brian can't watch his brother getting beat like that so pulls Walter off. Cranston starts to apologise but Brian tells him no, he's dishonoured himself and he wants nothing to do with him ever again. Cranston never came back from the war and hasn't set foot in Cartwell Manor since. Last I heard he was doing something out at sea or some such.

PENNY: And he and Brian never reconciled?

GRENVILLE: As far as Brian was concerned he had two brothers; Cranston & Walter, so when Cranston chose chasing tail rather than his brothers he made his choice. As far as I know they never spoke after that day.

PENNY: Wow.

PERRY: Wow.

GRENVILLE: Yup, wow. Any road up, this ain't getting the baby a frock and pinny. Look at the rest of them, falling asleep where they sit. Reckon it's best we all head up the wooden to our own rooms and lock the doors.

SCENE 2 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR, PENNY'S ROOM

PENNY: Grenville's suggestion we all get some proper rest in our rooms was greeted enthusiastically by everyone except for Walter & Saffron. They understandably weren't thrilled at the prospect of sharing a room now that Saffron's affair with Victoria was out in the open.

Perry, very chivalrously, offered Saffron his room as Walter was refusing to compromise, very... what's the antonym for chivalrously? The upshot was that Perry & I ended up sharing a room in a country house overnight. Again. The last time had been during the Crimes in a Country Garden down at Longmeadow Hall. Back then we'd had to pretend to be a married couple in order to investigate the murder of The Earl of Longmeadow's prize roses which quickly developed into the murder of his gardener Lance Brown. Things had felt awkward then, but now they felt positively breezy in comparison to the atmosphere in the room once Perry closed my bedroom door.

F/X: DOOR CLOSSES

PERRY: Right... well... here we are again Penny girl.

PENNY: Yes... Becoming a habit almost.

PERRY: Occupational hazard I suppose. Not that spending an evening with you is hazardous, quite the opposite. Not fraught with danger, but opportunity? No, I don't mean opportunity. I don't mean to say I see an opportunity. I mean, I suppose, viewed a different way there is an opportunity, but only insofar as opportunities abound everywhere. I see a window and I have the opportunity to jump through it, but I wouldn't. I won't. I'm not suggesting that, you know, anything with you would be akin to jumping out a window Penny, of course not, it's just...

PENNY: Perry sit down and stop jabbering.

PERRY: Yes. Sorry. Of course.

F/X: PERRY SITS ON THE FLOOR

PENNY: Perry threw himself cross legged onto the floor with alarming force.

Be careful Perry! You'll hurt yourself and worry Saffron next door who has had enough of a fright for one night. Stop being silly and come and sit on the bed.

PERRY: Right, yes. Sorry. The bed... next to you.

PENNY: Yes, next to me. It's been a horrible day and I'm not embarrassed to say I'm glad you're here with me.

PERRY: Oh.

PENNY: I find you reassuring Perry. I like it when you're around.

PERRY: I like being around Penny.

PENNY: Good.

PERRY: Good.

PENNY: There was moonlight coming in through the window, and I could feel myself relaxing as I looked at Perry. He was handsome in the pale glow. I hadn't been lying; his presence reassured me. Maybe I should say something, maybe Victoria was right.

Thinking about the note Victoria had written pulled me out of my reverie and straight back into the present. My dear school friend had been murdered quite shockingly. It had briefly appeared to be the work of her dead husband, back in poltergeist form, but now another, more plausible, theory had risen to the surface.

Brian had a twin brother who stood to inherit everything with Victoria out of the way. Of course, there were other suspects; Daniel Sessler, Victoria's business rival for one, whose wife just happened to be the medium in charge of proceedings. He had turned up in the cellar of Cartwell Manor admitting to spying but was claiming he was a victim of an attack too.

There was also Walter Herbertson-Jones, Brian's oldest friend, who has a history of rage and had recently found out Victoria was having an affair with his wife. All in all things were a bit murky.

PERRY: Are you OK Penny girl? You've drifted off a bit.

PENNY: I'm thinking about Victoria. I don't see how anyone here could have done it; we were all in the same room together when that thing appeared. It must be Cranston.

PERRY: I agree. Although, I'm still not ready to say it wasn't something clever using electricity, mirrors, and lights. They can do amazing things you know. I read this fascinating article actually...

PENNY: Normally Perry bringing up a fascinating article is my cue to cut him off, but tonight I slipped under the covers and let his voice wash over me as he

detailed the various applications of electrical current through various gasses, it soothed me as I drifted off to sleep.

PERRY: Goodnight Penny, I'll keep you safe I promise.

SCENE 3 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR – GREAT HALL

F/X: BREAKFAST SOUNDS

PENNY: The next morning, Grenville & Minnie had put together a large breakfast spread in the Great Hall and everyone was busy breaking their fasts. It didn't look like anyone had spent a restful night, the bags under our eyes could have kept a team of porters employed for weeks. As people shuffled around the large table helping themselves to bacon, eggs, sausages, and grilled tomatoes there was a fair amount of muttering and dark looks cast towards Perry & Terry. I'll let Perry explain what had happened.

PERRY: Well, after Penny had fallen asleep, I took it as my duty to stand watch. You know, in case that thing came back. So, I took a chair for the room and placed it outside the door blocking the entrance and sat down to begin my shift. You have to remember how difficult a day it had been, by now it is well into the early hours of the morning and of course it is Halloween. Cartwell Manor is a grand old pile, and like all old houses makes its fair share of noises as it settles of an evening.

F/X: CREEPY NOISES/WOOD GROANS

PERRY: I wouldn't say I was frightened, I'm a rational man, but at the same time to say I wasn't frightened would be stretching the truth. Let's say I wasn't not frightened shall we? Afterall, I'm sat in a supposedly haunted house in the middle of night, just hours after a horrible murder and the appearance of something spectral. Not unfrightened seems fair. Anyway, my senses are on high alert registering every creak and moan of the old house and sifting it for threat, when suddenly I hear something different.

F/X: SOMETHING DROPS/CLUNKS AND THEN A DRAGGING SOUND

PERRY: There was a thud from around the corner, so I look over to my left and I see a light sweeping around the far wall accompanied by a dragging/scratching sound. I, rather bravely to give me my due, get up and go to investigate.

F/X: PERRY PADS ALONG THE HALL

PERRY: As I reach the corner I decide that the element of surprise is in my favour, so I wait for the beam of light to swing away from me and leap out with a ha! Under the cover of darkness. At which point the beam swings back toward me, blinding me, and I hear a shriek from the other end of the corridor.

TERRY: Argh!

PERRY: So I shriek in return.

PERRY: Argh!

TERRY: Argh!

PERRY: Argh!

TERRY: Argh!

PERRY: I lost track of exactly how many shrieks we exchanged before Walter threw open his door brandishing a revolver and turned the lights on. It turned out that Terry and I were both shrieking at each other with our eyes closed, like two bats trying to echo-locate.

Terry had been sat outside the door of his beloved Charlotte Blakemore, for much the same reason as I was outside Penny's door. He had been more prepared though and had a torch, a flashlight he called it, which he dropped when he finally succumbed to sleep. That had been what I'd heard rolling back and forth shining its light.

Our shrieks had re-woken the house and were the reason we were not the most popular people the next morning around the breakfast table.

CHARLOTTE: I didn't ask you to loiter outside my room like some vagrant, or worse a guard at a prison Terry! It's creepy.

TERRY: I was there for your protection Charlie.

CHARLOTTE: Oh really? Asleep with a torch and then screaming like a stuck pig at the first sign of danger? Aren't I just the luckiest girl in the world to have such an heroic knight disrupting my night?

TERRY: Charlie!

PENNY: My heart went out to Terry who was glumly shuffling the food around his plate, but I couldn't help the thought that he seemed rather more upset to have disappointed Charlotte than he was about the murder of his sister. But I suppose he was still in shock. We all were. It was a great relief to everyone, myself included, when Grenville announced.

GRENVILLE: The phones are operational again and the police will be arriving shortly. Minnie, keep your eyes peeled for them.

MINNIE: Please sir, I don't want no trouble, but I'm not doing that.

GRENVILLE: Why ever not girl?

MINNIE: It sounds like it'll hurt.

GRENVILLE: How could it possibly hurt?

MINNIE: Have you seen how much skin comes off a potato? I'm not doing that to my eyes!

GRENVILLE: What?!

MINNIE: You said to peel my eyes sir.

GRENVILLE: It's an expression. It means keep an eye out.

MINNIE: I probably would take an eye out if I went at 'em with a peeler!

GRENVILLE: No, forget the peeler, just stand by the front door and let me know as soon as the police get here.

MINNIE: Yes sir.

SCENE 4 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR, GREAT HALL

F/X: CAR PULLS UP OUTSIDE

PENNY: It wasn't long before we heard a car pull up outside and Minnie came sprinting into the Great Hall to breathlessly announce.

MINNIE: They're here! They're here! The police is here!

GRENVILLE: Where are they then?

MINNIE: Outside sir, at the front door.

GRENVILLE: Haven't you let them in?

MINNIE: You told me to tell you straight away sir.

GRENVILLE: So I did, now go and actually let them into the house.

MINNIE: Yes sir, then I'll get on with the spuds straight away.

GRENVILLE: No! You don't... that would be great.

PENNY: Off Minnie ran at top speed. A few moments later the large curve of Inspector Colgate's belly entered the Great Hall, followed a moment later by the rest of him. He raised a bushy eyebrow and jiggled his prodigious moustache a little at the sight of Penny & I.

INSPECTOR: Pinks? I didn't realise you were involved in this, is it even worth my men investigating or have you got the whole thing wrapped up already?

PENNY: I filled the Inspector in what had happened and shared our strong suspicion that Cranston Cartwell was clearly the culprit.

INSPECTOR: Look, I know by now that if the P. Pink Detective Agency has a hunch about something it's well worth listening to, but at the same time you're not giving me any evidence here.

PENNY: There are two witnesses who can place Cranston here.

INSPECTOR: No, there are two witnesses who, as far as I can tell from what you've said, claim that Brian Cartwell was here. As a ghost.

PERRY: But that's ridiculous.

INSPECTOR: You'll not get an argument from me there, but it's what they're saying is it not?

PENNY: Colgate gave me an apologetic look and flipped his notebook closed.

INSPECTOR: Like I say, I've the utmost respect for the P.P.D.A and I will most certainly get an officer to look into Cranston Cartwell's whereabouts asap. But in the meantime I'm going to have a word with everyone myself if you don't mind, you know, let the actual policeman do some policework?

PENNY: Of course, I didn't mean to suggest...

INSPECTOR: I know you didnae Penny, but in the force we aren't allowed to investigate crimes that are close to us. It clouds the judgement. Victoria Cartwell was a friend of yours, you might not be seeing things as clearly as you normally do. Ghosts and identical twins? There is normally a much simpler explanation, like a jilted lover, a business rival, or maybe even a jealous sibling?

PENNY: With that he scooped up a sausage from the plate on the table next to him and popped it into his mouth. The size of his tache made it look like he was feeding some pet creature he allowed to live on his face. He nodded his head at me and signalled to his men to start organising people for interviews.

I sat back into my chair, frustrated at the Inspector's insistence on following his process even though I knew he was right. Perry came and sat next me with a steaming cup of coffee in each hand.

PERRY: Here you go Penny girl. Sorry again about last night.

PENNY: It was fine Perry, you were doing what you thought was right.

PERRY: Yes, just a shame Terry was doing the same thing and we spooked each other.

PENNY: Yes. What do you think about Terry Perry?

PERRY: He seems like a good enough sort of egg. For an American. Why? You're not planning on kissing him again are you Penny?

PENNY: No, of course not. It's just something the Inspector said. Don't worry about it.

SCENE 5 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR, GREAT HALL

F/X: LUNCH NOISES

PENNY: By the time Colgate had finished his interviews it was lunchtime and Grenville and Minnie had laid out a buffet of cold meats and cheeses in the Great Hall. I was impatient to speak with the Inspector, but he shooed me into a seat and told me to wait until he'd got his lunch. He waddled over. His plate was loaded high with at least two of everything on offer, and he sat down heavily on a seat next to me & Perry.

F/X: SEAT CREAKS AS INSPECTOR SITS

PENNY: So, what have you learned Inspector?

INSPECTOR: I'm only sharing this because of the respect I have for the P.P.D.A you understand? It is my investigation now and I expect you to keep your distance.

PENNY: I just want what is best for my friend.

INSPECTOR: I know you do.

PENNY: Well?

INSPECTOR: I'll admit the stories they all spun do seem to line up with everything you told me when I arrived. In fact, having been shown a photograph of Brian & Cranston Cartwell, Rosie Sessler/The Great Trianta also says the figure bore a striking resemblance.

PENNY: Well there you go then! It's just a case of tracking down and arresting Cranston.

PERRY: That's right isn't it Inspector?

INSPECTOR: We have tracked him down, but you're not going to like it.

PENNY: He's not dead is he?

INSPECTOR: Worse. He's living in France.

PERRY: Poor chap.

INSPECTOR: Stayed there after the war.

PENNY: That doesn't mean he wasn't here last night. People can travel to and from France Inspector.

INSPECTOR: Thank you Ms Pink, I'm well aware of that, but Cranston Cartwell has not. There is no record of him at any passport office and on top of that he was apparently giving a lecture in France last night. Our friends in the Gendarme are chasing up witnesses to confirm it, but I'm afraid I've no reason to doubt that that's exactly where he was.

PENNY: So what are you saying? The ghost of Brian came back to murder his wife?

INSPECTOR: No ma'am. I can't explain what happened when you all started messing with matters best left well alone, but I'm not going to charge a ghost with murder. Victoria Cartwell was killed by someone who was in this house last night. A living, breathing murderer, and I will find them.

PENNY: How?

INSPECTOR: Policework. My men are conducting a search of all the rooms as we speak.

PENNY: Perry had been largely focussed on eating his lunch up until this point. He dropped his fork with a clatter.

F/X: PERRY DROPS FORK

PERRY: You're searching the rooms?

INSPECTOR: Aye.

PERRY: For what?

INSPECTOR: Clues of course, why, what's it to you?

PERRY: Nothing, nothing at all. Can I just have a word in private Inspector?

PENNY: Colgate gave Perry a searching look.

PERRY: Why don't we just nip up for a quick spot of seconds and I can bend your ear quickly?

PENNY: The inspector grunted his approval and the two men bustled back to the table with Perry whispering something into the older man's ear. I was about to follow and demand Perry tell me what he was saying. But then one of Colgate's officers entered the hall and walked briskly over to him and whispered something in his other ear. The portly inspector turned sharply on his foot and bounded over to me faster than you would've thought, given his girth, and gave me a triumphant look.

INSPECTOR: Policework Ms Pink, policework. We're about to arrest Charlotte Blakemore for the murder of Victoria Cartwell.

PENNY: Really?

INSPECTOR: Really. We have just found the murder weapon, still bloody, in her room!