

Crimes at Cartwell
Episode 8

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SCENE 1 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR, DRIVEWAY

F/X: STRUGGLING NOISES AS CHARLOTTE IS PUT INTO A CAR

PENNY: The discovery of the murder weapon in Charlotte's room triggered a flurry of activity around the house. Her room was cordoned off, certain items taken away, and she herself was marched into a car in the driveway. She wasn't exactly resisting arrest, but nor was she complying meekly.

CHARLOTTE: Get your hands off me! Off me I say.

INSPECTOR: Steady now Miss Blakemore, steady.

CHARLOTTE: Terry! If you really want to be my saviour now would be a good time.

TERRY: I'm here for you Charlie!

CHARLOTTE: There's no good in you being here for me, they're taking me away from here to somewhere else. Somewhere horrid no doubt! Do something.

TERRY: Inspector Colgate, come on now, this is ludicrous. Is there nothing I can do to make you see that?

INSPECTOR: Listen to me son, I'm not arresting your sweetheart I'm arresting a murder suspect.

TERRY: But the murder suspect is my sweetheart.

CHARLOTTE: We're not sweethearts Terry!

TERRY: OK, not sweethearts. What's one step down from sweetheart?

PENNY: Terry turned to the little watching group assembled in the doorway with his arms outstretched appealing for answers. Perry provided one.

PERRY: Savoury hearts?

TERRY: Savoury hearts? I suppose it's better than sour hearts. What do you think Charlie? Savoury hearts?

CHARLOTTE: Terry! They're arresting me!

TERRY: Of course, Inspector, what can I do to get you to release my savoury heart?

INSPECTOR: I'm a simple man Mr Warner, I go where the evidence leads me. And right now, that evidence pretty strongly suggests that Miss Blakemore had at least some involvement in the murder of your sister. I'm not saying she acted

alone, I'm not even saying she necessarily knew what she was doing, but I need to get some concrete answers. The only way she's getting out of handcuffs is if the real killer comes forward.

PENNY: With his last line the Inspector gave Terry a searching look. He obviously suspected him of something, and it's true Terry seemed far more concerned for Charlotte's welfare than that of his poor sister. He stood and waved forlornly as the car drove Colgate and Charlotte away.

F/X: CAR DRIVES AWAY

PENNY: Then he spun on his heel with a steely look in his eye.

TERRY: Penny, can I have a word with you and Perry?

PENNY: Of course.

He strode off purposefully and sat on a bench in the shade of a grand old oak tree, I followed and sat next to him with Perry hovering nearby unsure what to do. I told him to perch on the armrest of the bench. It was a mistake. For a man who won an International Tennis Tournament, albeit he only playing two matches against significantly weakened opposition, he could be remarkably uncoordinated at times. He delicately backed himself down onto the bench's arm, but didn't seem to know what to do with his own arms. The obvious thing would have been to put one along the backrest, but I suppose he was concerned that would place he and I into a sort of seated hug. Whatever his thinking, he placed his hands in his lap and sat there wobbling precariously.

What did you want to talk about Terry?

TERRY: All this mess obviously. You two are detectives, right?

PENNY: We are.

TERRY: And you're good?

PENNY: We've had some success yes. We solved the murder of Lance Brown at Longmeadow Hall and were key in stopping Wendy Weaver from getting away with a series of murders at Wombledon Tennis Club.

Despite the situation I'll admit I was pleased to have an opportunity to tell Terry about the success of the P.P.D.A, I was proud of it. I'd always wanted to be a detective but didn't think I'd ever be allowed to investigate cases as a woman. When I took the job as Perry's assistant, I thought that would be as close as I'd get, but he has encouraged me all the way and now regularly places any praise the company receives squarely on my shoulders. I realised

I'd never really thanked Perry for the opportunity, and I turned to look at him. But as I did so my shoulder grazed his thigh disturbing his balance.

PERRY: Woah!

F/X: PERRY FALLS FROM THE BENCH

PERRY: I'm fine, it's fine. Carry on.

PENNY: They say it's not how you fall, but how you get back up. Well Perry fell spectacularly, a wild whirl of limbs seemed to suspend itself momentarily in the air before crashing to the floor, but he popped straight back up onto his little perch. This time though he did extend his arm out behind me and I enjoyed leaning back slightly against him and feeling the warmth of his body in the chilly November air.

TERRY: I know Charlie and Vic weren't exactly best friends, but there is no way Charlotte would have done that.

PENNY: I didn't know her, but she did seem to have a bit of temper.

TERRY: Oh god, Charlie was a real firecracker. She'd bite your head off and spit it in your face.

PERRY: Isn't your face part of your head?

TERRY: It's an expression Per.

PERRY: It is?

TERRY: Her ferocity is one of the things I love most about her. I'm not the sort of guy who wants some meek pretty little thing, I want spice and adventure.

PENNY: But might Charlotte's temper have boiled over too far this time?

TERRY: That's just it. It's a temper, a flare up, she lashes out in reaction to things. She doesn't plan out attacks in advance. Besides if she had done that to Vic she'd have been covered head to toe in blood wouldn't she?

PENNY: It was a good point, but Charlotte had been wrapped in layers of bandages as a mummy. So it is possible she could have just removed a layer or added another. Now I thought about it, I couldn't remember if she had been one of the people to have got changed out of their costumes immediately after the apparition.

That's a good point Terry, but isn't it true of everyone here?

TERRY: What about this Daniel Sessler who was hiding in the cellar?

PENNY: Daniel wasn't hiding, he was unconscious.

TERRY: OK, but do you really think Charlie could knock a guy out?

PENNY: Perry jumped in to answer that one.

PERRY: Oh with enough leverage and weight you'd be surprised how much force can be generated without resorting to pure muscle. There is a fascinating article actually-

PENNY: Perry.

PERRY: Absolutely.

TERRY: That may be so, but I'm not buying it. There is an obvious answer here; someone with motive, military training, and who could have slipped in and out unnoticed somehow: Cranston Cartwell.

PENNY: The police say he was in France giving a lecture.

TERRY: Just look into it. Please Penny, for Charlie. For me?

PENNY: Again I was struck by how Terry was far more concerned about Charlotte than his sister. I gave him an icy look.

I'm going to keep investigating Terry, but not for you or Charlotte. For Victoria, who you don't seem especially sad about.

TERRY: That's fair. I'm sorry. Truth is Vic and I have had our ups and downs. She used to love humiliating me as a kid. Then we got older and I accused her of not supporting me enough and she said I was just leaching off her and the Cartwell Haircare money. She was probably right. But I hated hearing it. I did love her though. I think maybe I'm throwing myself into this Charlie thing to avoid thinking about losing Vic. I'm sorry Penny, I know she was your friend.

PENNY: Just like that a switch flipped in Terry. He crumpled in on himself, all his righteous anger and American bluster fell away and I was looking at the hurt little boy I'd known as a child. I reached out and took his hands in mine, as I did so I felt Perry instinctively move his own hand from the back of the bench onto my shoulder. It wasn't a possessive grab, he was lending me his support and I appreciated it.

PERRY: We're going to solve this Terry, for Vicky and for everyone.

SCENE 2 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR, GARDEN ROOM

PENNY: Perry and I left Terry on the bench and headed inside. When he had left, Inspector Colgate had been quite clear we couldn't disturb the scenes in Charlotte's bedroom or the parlour where Victoria's body was found. But that left the rest of the house for us to comb for clues. We didn't find anything of particular interest until we came to the Garden Room.

PERRY: What are you looking for Penny? We searched in here when the first séance was interrupted. It's where Daniel Sessler says he snuck into the house, and where that bird that flew in.

PENNY: I told Perry we were double checking everything. This time we took great care in inspecting every detail of the room working from the doorway in. Things were easier now that there was daylight streaming in from the windows, but nothing leapt out. A few knickknacks had been knocked to the floor when Perry was trying to corral the crow, but other than that nothing seemed out of place. I moved to the window and saw a sheen on one of the frames.

Perry, come look at this.

PERRY: The window frame?

PENNY: What's on the frame Perry?

PERRY: Um... paint?

PENNY: No. Look, there's a sticky residue.

PERRY: You're right. You're incredible Penny girl.

PENNY: He looked at me with eyes full of admiration, and I felt my cheeks blush a little. But I didn't have time to savour the pleasant feeling because I'd just had an idea.

Perry, quickly draw the curtains, shut the door, and turn the lights out.

PERRY: Oh gosh, right are we...

PENNY: Just do it.

Perry practically tripped over himself in his haste to follow my instructions, and when he switched out the light, the room was plunged into an almost total darkness.

PERRY: Good curtains.

PENNY: I'm not interested in the curtains, Perry come here.

PERRY: OK. Um... Penny girl, before we... I just... there is something I want to...

PENNY: I didn't know what Perry was blathering on about, I wasn't really listening. I was so excited by what I'd just discovered.

Look!

While Perry had been making the room dark, I had rubbed some of the sticky residue between my fingers and now, in the blackness they were glowing the same pinky blue as the 'ghost'.

PERRY: Argh! What's that?

PENNY: It's my hand Perry, this goo, whatever it is, is how the ghost was glowing.

Open the curtains again.

PERRY: Oh so we're not...

PENNY: Not what?

PERRY: Nothing.

PENNY: There was a downbeat energy to Perry as he drew the curtains, I had no idea why. I'd just made a fairly momentous breakthrough and was absolutely humming with excitement. I felt like all of my senses were on overdrive and when the light streamed back into the room it only took my one glance through the window to spot the next clue.

What's that over there?

PERRY: Where?

PENNY: On the fence at the end of the garden, before the woods. There's something flapping in the breeze.

PERRY: I think I can see it.

PENNY: I was so buoyed by my find and impatient for more information that I flung open the window and clambered out, followed by Perry. It was only as I was halfway across the lawn that I realised my mistake.

Perry, footprints!

PERRY: Where?!

PENNY: Back in the flower bed outside the window. Did you see any footprints?

PERRY: I wasn't looking.

PENNY: Damn! You go back and check, I'll go and collect whatever that is on the fence.

As I feared, when Perry got back to the flower bed our (my) excitement had trampled everything. Any evidence there may or may not have been that showed whether Daniel had been followed into the house by anyone else, was gone.

As for my clue flapping in the breeze it turned out to just be a scrap of material. Again, my eagerness for knowledge had made me make a simple mistake. When I fished the fluttering fragment from the fence, I wasn't wearing gloves. I had put my fingerprints all over the evidence. But worse, I hadn't even washed my hands, so I smeared the glowing goo over it too. I now had no way of knowing whether this was part of the ghostly costume coated in the mysterious substance I'd found on the window, or just a random piece of cloth that could have blown into the fence on the breeze from anywhere.

SCENE 3 – EXT. CARTWELL MANOR DRIVEWAY

F/X: PENNY WALKING SLOWLY ROUND THE HOUSE, THEN A CAR PULLS UP

PENNY: Perhaps Inspector Colgate was right, maybe I was too close to this case. I was certainly making mistakes I wouldn't normally. I gave myself a bit of a talking to as Perry I walked around the side of the house. I chose to go via the front door rather than clambering back through the Garden Room window. In doing so it meant we were in prime position to see a taxi pull up and a man in his forties struggling to pull himself out of the backseat.

CRANSTON: Is there any chance you could help me sir?

PENNY: The man plaintively asked the driver, who appeared to grunt something in reply but didn't make a move. I felt a rush of sympathy for the poor man in the back and Perry & I both rushed over to lend a hand.

F/X: EFFORT NOISES

CRANSTON: Merci, thank you, my dear. Could you reach in and grab my cane and bag young man?

PERRY: Of course. Here's your cane, allow me to carry the bag.

PENNY: What Perry handed over was less a cane and more just a gnarled old stick. The man took it gratefully and leaned heavily onto it, breathing deeply and staring up at the house as the taxi sped away.

F/X: CAR EXITS

CRANSTON: Mon dieu. There she is. I didn't think I'd ever see the old girl again. I'd made my peace with that long ago. I can't quite believe I'm back.

PENNY: I suddenly realised who I had helped.

Are you Cranston Cartwell?

CRANSTON: I am. And who are you?

PENNY: Penny Pink sir, I'm a friend of Victoria's. Was I should say.

CRANSTON: I am sorry. A ghastly business. The police chap explained on the phone, but the line was a bit garbled, the connection to France often is, and he seemed to be saying something about the ghost of my brother? Sounded a bit fou, oh what's the word?

PENNY: Crazy? It's a long story Mr Cartwell.

CRANSTON: It's Dr Cartwell, a silly thing. But I worked so hard for my doctorate, without any support of course, that I'm rather protective over it.

PENNY: Of course, apologies Dr Cartwell. Let's get you inside and settled and I'll tell you everything I know as best I can.

Dr Cartwell looked at me with genuine kindness and gratitude. I'd meant what I said, the poor man looked frail, and a bit overcome to see his childhood home, I'd get him a good stiff drink and tell what I knew. Whilst all the while trying to get as much information from him as possible in return.

The walk to the house was only a short distance but took a little while thanks to Dr Cartwell's shuffling limp. His right leg seemed to have very little strength at all. I offered my arm to help but the doctor waved me off saying.

CRANSTON: Oh, I'll be fine under my own steam thank you my dear. It's an old injury. My plane came down with a bit of help from the opposition, I survived but I'll forever have a bit of my de Havilland with me. Quite the Mosquito bite.

PENNY: Perry laughed out loud at the quip.

PERRY: The de Havilland DH. 98 was a twin-engine, shoulder winged wooden wonder called the Mosquito Penny.

PENNY: He explained with a gleam in his eye that you see in young boys when they talk about planes, tanks, or any other loud and destructive piece of engineering.

PERRY: Were you involved in lots of air battles?

CRANSTON: A few, but that was my last. I've never felt the sky welcome me since, never flown again.

SCENE 4 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR, DRAWING ROOM

PENNY: I settled Dr Cartwell into a chair in the drawing room and called for Grenville to provide refreshments. The old retainer looked like he'd seen ghost when he walked in to find Cranston sat on a chair.

GRENVILLE: Cranston?! What are you doing here?

PENNY: At the butler's entrance Cranston sprung to his feet. He clearly wasn't sure what sort of reception he was likely to receive.

CRANSTON: When the police called and told me what had happened, I got on the next ferry available. Got a taxi straight here from Dover. I understand if you'd prefer me to stay in a hotel.

GRENVILLE: No sir. It's good to have a Cartwell back under the roof. I'll get Minnie to make up your room sir.

PENNY: Before leaving Grenville shook Cranston's hand warmly, and then quickly left the room covering his face. It was the most emotion I'd seen from him ever. Once Grenville had left, Perry & I filled the doctor in on what had happened. I kept back my morning's discoveries, ending with the arrest of Charlotte. He listened to the story in silence and gently shook his head when we were finished. He muttered something quietly, almost to himself.

CRANSTON: The silly girl. What good does it do now?

PENNY: What do you mean sir?

CRANSTON: Charlotte, avenging the great wrong she must have felt.

PENNY: I'm sorry, I don't follow.

CRANSTON: Charlotte was besotted with my brother, absolutely cloud-cuckoo, head of heels in love with him. Jealous too. Not that she had any right to be. Brian always played a straight bat with her, never gave her any reason to think her feelings were reciprocated. But that didn't stop her. I remember there was one dance when Brian had been paying some girl from the village quite a bit of attention and Charlotte slashed her dress with a pair of scissors. She said it was an accident of course, but it was plain to see. There was another incident where she'd got it into her head Brian was favouring one of our maid's, can't remember the name, but the poor thing's cat wound up dead. Knife to the stomach as I recall. Again, we all knew it was Charlotte, but it was brushed under the carpet. The maid was packed off to a different family somewhere with a very generous severance and everyone moved on. Maybe if we'd be stronger then this could have been avoided.

PENNY: He sighed wistfully.

So you don't have a problem believing Charlotte is capable of murder?

CRANSTON: I study marine wildlife Ms Pink, the natural world is a more violent place than you'd like to think. Our society, our civilisation is just the thinnest layer of cover for the animals we are underneath. I can be both shocked and appalled by the reprehensible acts of violence we perpetrate on one another, and at the same time be not the least surprised.

PENNY: In your studies of the natural world have you ever come across anything like the supernatural we saw here?

CRANSTON: This apparition? The ghost of Brian? No. But I've travelled all over the world for my work and every culture has the same stories. I could be persuaded to believe under the right circumstances perhaps. I certainly wish I could have the chance to speak to Brian. To apologise.

PENNY: You regret your choice?

CRANSTON: I definitely regret the beating I took from Walter! I think he would have killed me had Brian not stepped in.

PENNY: Is that a turn of phrase or do you really think Walter Herbertson-Jones could kill?

CRANSTON: Could and has. Even though I chose the RAF and respected Brian's orders to stay away, I had a friend in their unit who kept tabs on my brothers for me (and you must remember Walter was like a brother to us both). Walter had quite the reputation for brutality, even in the context of a war. But I don't think for a second he would hurt Brian's wife, he'd expect the same level of protection as with his own. God protect anyone who were to mistreat his 'property' and unless he's very much a changed man I suspect he views his wife as such.

PENNY: I'd kept Saffron & Victoria's romance out of my retelling, I regretted it now, another lapse in judgement trying to spare my friend from what felt like gossip. When I told Cranston, his eyebrows flew up his forehead with such speed I thought they might continue up indefinitely, flying free of his face.

CRANSTON: Really? Well that does change things... What kind of knife did they find in Charlotte's room?