

PERUSAL SCRIPT

*An Heir of
Mystery*

by Jim Christian

A CHAMELEONS MURDER MYSTERY



Salt Lake City

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AN HEIR OF MYSTERY

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CHARACTERS (5M 3W)

PIPPA WINSLOW – DAUGHTER OF THE LATE HAMILTON WINSLOW – WHOLESOMELY ATTRACTIVE – GRACIOUS AND HOSPITABLE – SEEMINGLY NORMAL, BUT HAS A LARGE COLLECTION OF ANTIQUE TORTURE DEVICES

JONATHAN BASHFORD – BUTLER – MILDLY NARCOLEPTIC – METICULOUS – CONSTANTLY CLEANS UP AFTER EVERYONE, ESPECIALLY BILL – HAS BEEN TOO RESTRAINED FOR TOO LONG

FANNY PUTNAM – MAID – AN ABSOLUTE KLUTZ – EXTREMELY LOOSE LIPS IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE – USED TO PERSONALLY ATTEND HAMILTON WINSLOW – A BIT OF A JINX

WILLIAM “BILL” SLEDGEPOOLE – HANDYMAN – DARK AND BROODING – FAVORITE HOBBIES ARE LURKING ABOUT AND SNOOPING – KNOWS THE HOUSE INSIDE AND OUT – SPEAKS HIS MIND FREELY – ULTIMATELY GRIMY

THADDEUS WINSLOW – BROTHER OF THE LATE HAMILTON WINSLOW – HUMORLESS CURMUDGEON – LONG-TIME OWNER OF A STRUGGLING (FAILING) DOG FOOD FACTORY – WIFE DESERTED HIM FOR A ROCK MUSICIAN

MALCOM WINSLOW – NEPHEW OF THE LATE HAMILTON WINSLOW – SON OF THADDEUS – SELF-STYLED CLAIRVOYANT – ECCENTRIC AND FLAMBOYANT – GUSHY AND TOO, TOO FRIENDLY – INVADES EVERYONE’S PERSONAL SPACE

SYBIL WINSLOW-SMYTHE – SISTER OF THE LATE HAMILTON WINSLOW – PUSHY, EXTRAVAGANT, AND ECCENTRIC – LOST HER HUSBAND IN A BIG GAME HUNTING ACCIDENT – HAS SQUANDERED MOST OF HIS LEGACY – SELECTIVE ETHICS

REGINALD “REGGIE” WINSLOW-SMYTHE – NEPHEW OF THE LATE HAMILTON WINSLOW – SON OF SYBIL – OVERGROWN 12 YEAR-OLD WITH GLAND TROUBLE – PETULANT, SELFISH & SUSPICIOUS OF EVERYTHING – A SPOILED TATTLETALE

THE SETTING: THE GREAT HALL AT WINSLOW MANOR

THE OCCASION: THE READING OF THE LATE HAMILTON WINSLOW’S WILL

AN HEIR OF MYSTERY *A CHAMELEON’S MURDER MYSTERY* by Jim Christian. **Characters: 5m 3w**
Synopsis: Following the death of tycoon Hamilton Winslow, his surviving family and servants gather for the reading of the will in his British mansion. Winner takes all and the body count begins to rise. **(ORDER #3089)**

1 -- COCKTAILS:

(AS THE GUESTS ARRIVE, THEY ARE GREETED BY BASHFORD. COATS ARE GIVEN TO FANNY WHILE PIPPA ACTS AS HOSTESS, SHOWING PEOPLE TO THEIR SEATS. BILL OCCASIONALLY SLIPS IN THE ODD EXCUSE TO MINGLE WITH THE CROWD. EVERYONE SEEMS CONCERNED ABOUT THE TIME AND THE ARRIVAL OF REMAINING FAMILY MEMBERS.)

2 -- AFTER COCKTAILS:

PIPPA: BASHFORD – WOULD YOU BE KIND ENOUGH TO CLOSE THE DOORS?

BASHFORD: YES, MISS.

PIPPA: FANNY?

FANNY: YES, MISS.

PIPPA: PLEASE ALERT THE KITCHEN THAT WE WILL BE DINING SHORTLY.

FANNY: YES, MISS.

(SHE TURNS AND FALLS INTO SOMEONE'S LAP)

BEGGIN' YOUR PARDON, SIR...

PIPPA: *(WITH A NOTE OF WARNING)* FANNY...

FANNY: RIGHT AWAY, MISS.

(SHE EXITS)

BILL: *(TO PIPPA)* IS IT TIME, MISS PIPPA?

PIPPA: *(CONSULTING HER WATCH)* ALMOST. DID YOU FINISH ALL OF THOSE REPAIRS THAT I GAVE YOU?

BILL: YES, MISS. ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THE TIME?

PIPPA: QUITE SURE.

BILL: I MEAN I DIDN'T SEE NO ONE COMIN' UP THE DRIVE FOR QUITE SOME TIME...

PIPPA: THEN THAT'S A GOOD THING, ISN'T IT?

BILL: I THINK SO...

PIPPA: WELL, OF COURSE IT IS.

BASHFORD: YES. DON'T YOU REMEMBER THE INSTRUCTIONS?

BILL: *(NOT WISHING TO APPEAR THE FOOL)* WELL, OF COURSE I DO.

PIPPA: *(TO BILL)* THEN WHY DON'T YOU GO GIVE ONE LAST LOOK AND THAT WAY WE CAN BE CERTAIN.

BILL: RIGHT, MISS.
(HE GOES)

FANNY: *(RETURNING)* THE KITCHEN STAFF IS AT THE READY, MISS.

PIPPA: THANK YOU, FANNY.

BASHFORD: MISS PIPPA, I BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES UNTIL "ZERO HOUR."

PIPPA: EXCELLENT.

FANNY: DOES THIS MEAN WE GET ALL THE MONEY?

PIPPA: NO – IT MEANS THAT IF ANYONE NAMED IN THE WILL FAILS TO ATTEND THE READING TONIGHT, THEN THEIR MONEY WILL BE REDISTRIBUTED AMONG THE SURVIVING HEIRS.

FANNY: AND THAT MEANS US.

PIPPA: WELL, LET'S HOPE SO.

FANNY: OOH...LOVELY.

BASHFORD: *(WITH RESERVE)* FANNY!

FANNY: *(QUICKLY TO PIPPA)* OH, MEANIN' NO DISRESPECT, MISS, I'M SURE.

PIPPA: OF COURSE.

FANNY: AFTER ALL, I WAS AS FOND OF THE LATE GUV'NOR AS ANYONE...

PIPPA: WE KNOW THAT.

FANNY: I DIDN'T MIND THE ODD PINCH ON ME BUM...

(BILL HAS RE-ENTERED, HEARING JUST THE LAST OF THIS.)

PIPPA: FANNY...

BILL: DERRIERE.

BASHFORD: WHAT?

BILL: *(RECOUNTING)* "BUM...FANNY...BUTT...DERRIERE."

(SENSING THEIR OBVIOUS DISDAIN)

I THOUGHT WE WERE PLAYING "WORD ASSOCIATIONS."

(HE SULKS)

PIPPA: *(WITH ALOOFNESS)* NO-O-O.

BASHFORD: IDIOT.

BILL: LISTEN, YOU LITTLE PUKE, I'VE HALF A MIND NOT TO TELL YOU WHO'S COMIN' UP THE DRIVE THIS VERY MINUTE.

FANNY: OH, NO.

PIPPA: IS IT HER?

BASHFORD: IS IT HIM?

(BILL DOESN'T ANSWER)

PIPPA: WELL?!!!

BILL: *(AFTER A BEAT)* IT'S THEM.

FANNY: TOGETHER?

PIPPA: THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

BASHFORD: DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.

PIPPA: HIM AND HER TOGETHER?

BILL: I DIDN'T SAY "HIM AND HER" – IT AIN'T "HIM AND HER" –
(THERE IS A GREAT POUNDING AT THE DOOR)
IT'S "HIM AND HIM."

ALL: OH, NO.

THADDEUS: *(BURSTING THROUGH THE DOOR, TRAILING MALCOLM BEHIND HIM WHO IS BABBLING A MILE A MINUTE)* WHERE THE HELL ARE THE SERVANTS? I'VE BEEN RINGING YOUR BLOODY BELL OFF THE WALL.
(THROWING HIS COAT AT BASHFORD WHO PASSES IT OFF TO FANNY)

MALCOLM: ...AND THE SERVICE THERE WAS JUST A NIGHTMARE. NO HOT WATER – NO FRESH TOWELS – AND THE UGLIEST BEDSPREADS YOU'VE EVER SEEN.
(ALSO UNLOADING HIS COAT ON BASHFORD)
THANK YOU, BASHFORD.

PIPPA: I GUESS THE BELL IS OUT OF SERVICE, UNCLE THADDEUS. BILL, I ASKED YOU TO FIX THAT.

BILL: SORRY, MISS. RAN OUT OF TIME.

MALCOLM: COUSIN PIPPA!
(RUSHING TO HER AND GIVING HER COCKTAIL PARTY HUGS AND KISSES)

PIPPA: HELLO, MALCOLM.

MALCOLM: HOW ARE YOU? I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN ABSOLUTE EONS. AND WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL ME ABOUT TONIGHT? AREN'T I SUPPOSED TO BE HERE?

PIPPA: YOU WERE NEVER HO--

MALCOLM: IF DADDY HADN'T GOTTEN A FLAT TIRE AND RUNG ME UP FOR A LIFT, I WOULD NEVER HAVE GOTTEN HERE AT ALL.

THADDEUS: *(TO THE GROUP)* SORRY.

MALCOLM: I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SEEING "CATS" AGAIN TONIGHT WITH MILO AND SUKIE, BUT WHEN I WOKE UP THIS MORNING, I HAD THIS...FEELING...THAT SOMETHING WAS GOING TO GO ASKEW WITH MY PLANS AND, SURE ENOUGH, DADDY CALLED AND HERE I AM. SUCH IS THE LIFE OF A CLAIRVOYANT.

THADDEUS: YOU ARE NOT CLAIRVOYANT.

MALCOLM: *(TO THE OTHERS AS HE GESTURES TOWARD THADDEUS)* THE GREAT UNBELIEVER.

THADDEUS: *(SMACKING MALCOLM'S HAND OUT OF THE WAY)* DON'T DO THAT!
(TO THE OTHERS)

COULD WE PLEASE GET THIS OVER WITH?

PIPPA: *(CONSULTING HER WATCH)* WE STILL HAVE TO WAIT ANOTHER THIRTY SECONDS BEFORE WE CAN OFFICIALLY BEGIN.

THADDEUS: NO, WE DON'T.

PIPPA: YES, WE DO.

MALCOLM: I ALREADY KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN.

THADDEUS: SHUT UP!

(THERE IS ANOTHER POUNDING AT THE DOOR)

PIPPA: OH, BOTHER.

(RE-CHECKING HER WATCH)

BASHFORD?

BASHFORD: YES, MISS.

(HE GOES TO THE DOOR AND OPENS IT)

SYBIL: *(BURSTING IN WITH REGGIE IN TOW)* DON'T TOUCH THAT MONEY! I'VE BEEN LISTENING TO GREENWICH TIME ON THE CAR PHONE ALL THE WAY HERE, SO I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T TRIED ANY CHEAP TRICKS LIKE SETTING THE CLOCKS AHEAD.

(PAUSE)

WELL, ISN'T ANYONE GLAD TO SEE ME?

PIPPA: HELLO, AUNT SYBIL.

SYBIL: THADDEUS?

(THADDEUS GRUNTS)

OH, HOW COMFORTING IT IS TO BE BACK IN THE LOVING BOSOM OF MY DEAR, DEAR FAMILY.

REGGIE: I TOLD YOU THEY HATE US.

SYBIL: SHUT UP, REGGIE.

MALCOLM: (*MOVING TO EMBRACE SYBIL*) WELL, I'M TICKLED PINK TO SEE YOU AGAIN, AUNT SYBIL.

SYBIL: (*PUSHING HIM AWAY*) DON'T TOUCH ME. YOU ALWAYS LEAVE WET MARKS ALL OVER MY CLOTHES. SLIMY LITTLE MONSTER...

MALCOLM: BUT I THOUGHT WE WERE "SIMPATICO"...

REGGIE: SHE HATES YOUR GUTS!

SYBIL: REGGIE! WE ARE GUESTS HERE. LET'S REMEMBER OUR MANNERS.

THADDEUS: (*TO PIPPA*) ENOUGH OF THIS DRIVEL. IT'S TIME TO READ THE WILL.
(*REACHES INTO HIS JACKET POCKET*)

PIPPA: YES, OF COURSE. BASHFORD...

BASHFORD: CERTAINLY, MISS.
(*HE RETRIEVES LARGE MANILA ENVELOPE*)

PIPPA: MY FATHER LEFT THIS ENVELOPE WITH OUR SOLICITORS. THEY BROUGHT IT BY THE MANOR EARLIER TODAY. I'M CERTAIN IT CONTAINS HIS LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

SYBIL: NOT SO FAST, PUMPKIN. HAMILTON'S SOLICITORS BROUGHT THE WILL TO OUR FLAT THIS MORNING.

REGGIE: SO "HA!"

THADDEUS: BUT THEY ALSO CAME TO MY PLACE TODAY AND LEFT THIS.
(*BRANDISHES ENVELOPE*)

FANNY: WHAT'S THAT?

THADDEUS: WELL, LET'S FIND OUT, SHALL WE?
(*HE TEARS ENVELOPE*)

PIPPA: BUT THIS IS THE WILL.
(*SHE OPENS ENVELOPE*)

SYBIL: (*OPENING ENVELOPE*) I DON'T THINK SO...
(*THEY ALL OPEN IDENTICAL LETTERS AND BEGIN READING SILENTLY*)

BILL: WELL, WHAT'S IT SAY?
(*PIPPA, SYBIL, AND THADDEUS EXCHANGE GLANCES AND BEGIN READING IN CONCERT*)

PIPPA, SYBIL, THADDEUS: "DEAR VULTURES – AT LAST I AM FREE FROM YOUR GRASPING AND CONNIVING WAYS. REST ASSURED THAT YOU WILL ALL RECEIVE YOUR JUST PORTION

OF MY ESTATE, HOWEVER, KNOWING THAT I COULDN'T TRUST ANY ONE OF YOU AS EXECUTOR OF MY WILL (AND HEAVEN HELP THAT I WOULD LEAVE THAT RESPONSIBILITY TO MY INCOMPETENT SOLICITORS), I HAVE DEVISED A LITTLE PLAN TO ENSURE HONESTY. PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPES TO THE APPROPRIATE PERSONS IN ORDER TO HEAR MY WILL. WITH ALL DUE CONTEMPT, HAMILTON WINSLOW."

MALCOLM: HOW RUDE!

PIPPA: LOOK, THERE ARE ENVELOPES HERE MARKED "SYBIL" AND "MALCOLM."

MALCOLM: AH, GOODY!

(HE GETS HIS ENVELOPES AND TAKES SYBIL'S TO HER)

SYBIL: AND I HAVE ONES FOR PIPPA, THADDEUS, AND BASHFORD.

(BASHFORD OBTAINS THESE AND DISTRIBUTES THEM)

REGGIE: MUMMY, I WANT AN ENVELOPE!

SYBIL: I'M SORRY, DARLING, BUT THESE AREN'T FOR YOU.

REGGIE: I DON'T CARE—I WANT ONE AND I WANT IT NOW!

SYBIL: REGGIE!

REGGIE: I WANT AN ENVELOPE – I WANT AN ENVELOPE – I WANT AN ENVELOPE...

(THADDEUS STUFFS AND ENVELOPE IN REGGIE'S MOUTH)

THADDEUS: AND I HOPE YOU CHOKE ON IT.

REGGIE: OH, MUMMY...

(SYBIL LOOKS AT HIM, HE WAVES THE ENVELOPE IN HER FACE)

BILL: WHAT ABOUT ME?

FANNY: AND ME?

THADDEUS: HERE.

(THEY GO TO HIM FOR THEIR ENVELOPES – FANNY TRIPS AND FALLS INTO THADDEUS)

SYBIL: *(READING HER LETTER)* BUT THIS IS ABSOLUTE NONSENSE...

PIPPA: IT'S JUST A LOT OF WORDS...

MALCOLM: PURE GOBBLEDEGOOK.

SYBIL: *(READS HER PASSAGE)* MIND – OF – THE – TREACHEROUS – INSIDIOUS – CALCULATING – PUTNAM –

(SHE LOOKS AT FANNY)

– THE – THE – BE...

BILL: I DON'T GET IT...

BASHFORD: I THINK I MIGHT BE OF SOME ASSISTANCE HERE. LISTEN --

“BASHFORD – PLEASE LINE EVERYONE UP IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER AND, STARTING WITH BILL, HAVE THEM READ THEIR LETTERS ONE WORD AT A TIME. BILL – REGGIE – BASHFORD – PIPPA – THADDEUS – FANNY – SYBIL – MALCOLM.”

(THEY ALL LOOK AT HIM BLANKLY)

WELL, LET'S BE ABOUT IT, SHALL WE?

(INDICATING THEIR PLACES, THEY ASSUME THEM)

“BILL – REGGIE – BASHFORD – PIPPA – THADDEUS – FANNY -SYBIL – MALCOLM.”
ALL RIGHT, LET'S BEGIN.

BILL: WITH ME?

BASHFORD: YES.

BILL: ONE WORD AT TIME?

BASHFORD: YES.

BILL: NOW?

BASHFORD: START!

BILL: “I,

REGGIE: HAMILTON

BASHFORD: WINSLOW,

PIPPA: BEING

THADDEUS: OF

FANNY: SOUND

SYBIL: MIND

MALCOLM: AND

BILL: BODY

REGGIE: DO

BASHFORD: HEREBY

PIPPA: BEQUEATH

THADDEUS: THE

FANNY: ENTIRETY

SYBIL: OF

MALCOLM: MY

BILL: ESTATE

REGGIE: TO..."

(BEFORE HE CAN SPEAK THE NEXT WORD, BASHFORD DEAD FALLS TO THE FLOOR)

PIPPA: BASHFORD!

MALCOLM: MY HEAVENS!

THADDEUS: IS HE DEAD?

(BILL MOVES THE BODY AND BEGINS FORCING IT UP)

SYBIL: NEVER MIND ABOUT THAT...WHO GETS THE MONEY?

REGGIE: IS IT ME?

MALCOLM: *(HAVING AN INSPIRATION)* HE'S BEEN MURDERED!

BILL: NO, HE AIN'T.

THADDEUS: HE LOOKS DEAD.

BILL: HE AIN'T DEAD!

SYBIL: HOW CAN YOU BE SURE?

BILL: HE'S A KLEPTOMANIAC.

THADDEUS: WHAT?

PIPPA: HE MEANS A NARCOLEPTIC.

REGGIE: WHAT'S THAT?

PIPPA: HE SUFFERS FROM A SLEEP DISORDER. EVERY NOW AND THEN HE JUST PASSES OUT ON US.

THADDEUS: LIKE THIS?

PIPPA: ALL THE TIME.

SYBIL: WELL, I THINK IT'S MOST INAPPROPRIATE.

REGGIE: I THINK IT'S NIFTY. I WANT TO BE A "NARPOLECTIC."

SYBIL: DARLING, DO SHUT UP.

BASHFORD: *(COMING TO)* HULLO...OH...DID I NOD OFF? SORRY, MISS.

PIPPA: IT'S PERFECTLY ALL RIGHT.

FANNY: SO WHO GETS THE MONEY?

BASHFORD: WHAT? OH, I...I REALLY CAN'T TELL.

THADDEUS: BUT YOU WERE JUST ABOUT TO ANNOUNCE IT?

BASHFORD: (*REFERRING TO THE LETTER*) ACTUALLY, NO. MY NEXT WORD WOULD HAVE BEEN
“BE” ...

REGGIE: WHO IS “BEA?”

PIPPA: LOOK, WE'RE JUST WASTING TIME. IT'S OBVIOUS THAT OUR ONLY WAY TO FIND OUT
WHAT FATHER SAID IS TO GET BACK IN LINE AND START ALL OVER AGAIN.

(THEY SCURRY INTO PLACE)

MALCOLM: OH, BOTHER!

PIPPA: ARE WE ALL SET?

(GENERAL ASSENT)

VERY WELL, BILL – YOU MAY BEGIN.

BILL: “I,

REGGIE: HAMILTON

BASHFORD: WINSLOW,

PIPPA: BEING

THADDEUS: OF

FANNY: SOUND

SYBIL: MIND

MALCOLM: AND

BILL: BODY

REGGIE: DO

BASHFORD: HEREBY

PIPPA: BEQUEATH

THADDEUS: THE

FANNY: ENTIRETY

SYBIL: OF

MALCOLM: MY

BILL: ESTATE

REGGIE: TO

BASHFORD: BE

PIPPA: DIVIDED

THADDEUS: EQUALLY

FANNY: AMONG

SYBIL: THE

MALCOLM: FOLLOWING

BILL: INDIVIDUALS

REGGIE: MY

BASHFORD: DECEPTIVE

PIPPA: DAUGHTER,

THADDEUS: PIPPA;

FANNY: MY

SYBIL: TREACHEROUS

MALCOLM: BROTHER,

BILL: THADDEUS;

REGGIE: MY

BASHFORD: DESPICABLE

PIPPA: NEPHEW,

THADDEUS: MALCOLM;

FANNY: MY

SYBIL: INSIDIOUS

MALCOLM: SISTER,

BILL: SYBIL;

REGGIE: HER

BASHFORD: MALEVOLENT

PIPPA: OFFSPRING,

THADDEUS: REGINALD;

FANNY: MY

SYBIL: CALCULATING

MALCOLM: MANSERVANT,

BILL: JONATHAN

REGGIE: BASHFORD;

BASHFORD: MY

PIPPA: CONNIVING

THADDEUS: HOUSEMAID,

FANNY: FANNY

SYBIL: PUTNAM;

MALCOLM: AND

BILL: MY

REGGIE: VILE

BASHFORD: RETAINER,

PIPPA: WILLIAM

THADDEUS: SLEDGEPOOLE.

FANNY: IN

SYBIL: THE

MALCOLM: EVENT

BILL: OF

REGGIE: ANY

BASHFORD: OF

PIPPA: THEIR

THADDEUS: DEATHS

FANNY: DURING

SYBIL: THE

MALCOLM: NEXT

BILL: TWELVE

REGGIE: MONTHS,

BASHFORD: ALL

PIPPA: REMAINING

THADDEUS: INHERITANCE

FANNY: WILL

SYBIL: BE

MALCOLM: DIVIDED

BILL: EQUALLY

REGGIE: AMONG

BASHFORD: THE

PIPPA: SURVIVING

THADDEUS: HEIRS. YOU MEAN TO TELL ME THAT WE HAVE TO DIVIDE THE INHERITANCE EIGHT WAYS?

FANNY: YES, WITH ALL OF US.

BILL: THAT'S RIGHT, GUV'NOR. OR SHOULD I SAY "THADDEUS, YOU OLD WINDBAG?"

BASHFORD: MISS PIPPA, I SHOULD LIKE TO TENDER MY RESIGNATION, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.

PIPPA: BUT YOU CAN'T DO THAT!

BASHFORD: JUST WATCH ME.

SYBIL: I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT HAMILTON WOULD DO THIS TO US – HIS OWN FLESH AND BLOOD.

REGGIE: DON'T BE UPSET, MUMMY. WE HAVE MY EIGHTH AND YOUR EIGHTH...THAT MAKES ONE FOURTH.

SYBIL: (*SOMEWHAT CONSOLED*) THAT'S TRUE.

REGGIE: AND WHEN UNCLE THADDEUS FINALLY KICKS OFF WE'LL HAVE A SEVENTH AND A SEVENTH.

THADDEUS: WHAT?!!!

BILL: (*THE BIG LIGHT BULB*) THAT'S RIGHT!

FANNY: (*BIGGER LIGHT BULB*) EVERY TIME ONE OF US DIES...THE REST GET RICHER.

THADDEUS: WAIT A MINUTE – WHAT IF I DON'T DIE DURING THE NEXT YEAR?

REGGIE: FAT CHANCE OF THAT!

SYBIL: REGGIE!

BASHFORD: (*MENACINGLY, TO REGGIE*) WHO KNOWS, MY LITTLE KIDNEY PIE – YOU MAY BE THE FIRST TO GO!

(REGGIE SCREAMS AND RUNS BEHIND SYBIL)

MALCOLM: THIS IS HORRIBLE!

BASHFORD: ISN'T IS JUST? EVIDENTLY, MR. WINSLOW HATED EACH OF US ENOUGH TO LEAVE BEHIND THE ULTIMATE LEGACY – DEATH BY INHERITANCE!

SYBIL: HE'S RIGHT!

FANNY: DON'T NOBODY TOUCH ME!

(SHE FUMBLES AND FALLS INTO ANOTHER AUDIENCE MEMBER LAP)

AAAAAAAH!

(SHE LEAPS TO HER FEET AND MOVES AWAY)

BILL: I'LL RIP YOUR BLEEDIN' EYES OUT!

PIPPA: NOW, STOP IT! CAN'T WE ALL JUST ACCEPT THE BOUNTEOUS LEGACY LEFT TO EACH OF US BY MY FATHER AND BE HAPPY WITH OUR LIVES?

ALL: NO!!!

THADDEUS: DOES ANYBODY KNOWS HOW MUCH HE LEFT?

SYBIL: AND WHO GETS THE DIAMOND?

ALL: THE DIAMOND!

FANNY: I'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE DIAMOND!

SYBIL: I'LL BET YOU DID.

THADDEUS: THAT DOES IT – EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF!

PIPPA: THAT'S ENOUGH! I'M GOING TO RING THE BURGLAR ALARM AND SUMMON A POLICEMAN!

(AS SHE HITS THE BUTTON, THE LIGHTS BLACK OUT. IN THE ENSURING DARKNESS THERE ARE SCREAMS AND INITIAL CONFUSION, AFTER WHICH BASHFORD, FANNY, AND BILL PRODUCE CANDLES AND DISTRIBUTE THEM TO THE CHARACTERS.)

BASHFORD: THERE NOW...HAS EVERYONE GOT A CANDLE?

(GENERAL POSITIVE RESPONSE)

FANNY: *(BURNING HER FINGER)* OWW! SORRY...

BASHFORD: WHAT ABOUT YOU, MISS PIPPA?

(NO ANSWER)

REGGIE: MALCOLM'S IS BIGGER THAN MINE.

SYBIL: *(WARNING)* REGGIE...!

THADDEUS: WHAT HAPPENED?

BILL: I GUESS MISS PIPPA MUST HAVE BLOWN A FUSE WHEN SHE HIT THE ALARM. AIN'T THAT RIGHT, MISS PIPPA?

BASHFORD: MISS PIPPA?

FANNY: (*DISCOVERING PIPPA'S BODY WITH A KNIFE IN HER HEART*) EEEEEEEEE!!! SHE'S OVER HERE!

BILL: (*WITH THE BODY*) EVEN A NECROMANIAC AIN'T GONNA SURVIVE A KNIFE IN THE TICKER!

MALCOLM: OOH! SHE LOOKS DEAD.

SYBIL: ARE YOU SURE SHE ISN'T JUST PLAYING POSSUM, TOO?

MALCOLM: OH – I'M GETTING WOOZY.

REGGIE: (*MOVING TO THE BODY*) I WANT TO SEE.

SYBIL: REGGIE! DON'T TOUCH A THING!

BASHFORD: BILL! GO TO THE CELLAR AND TRY TO GET THE ELECTRICITY BACK ON.

BILL: RIGHT, GUV. I'LL BE BACK IN A JIFF TO HELP WITH THE BODY.

BASHFORD: FANNY – GET SOMETHING TO COVER UP MISS PIPPA.

FANNY: BUT I--

BASHFORD: JUST DO IT!

FANNY: FLIPPIN' CHEEK!
(*SHE GOES*)

BASHFORD: (*ADDRESSING THE CROWD*) AND AS FOR THE REST OF YOU, I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU ALL TO BE MY GUESTS FOR A SUMPTUOUS FEAST HERE AT MY NEW HOME -- "BASHFORD HALL."

THADDEUS: WHAT DO YOU MEAN "BASHFORD HALL?" THIS IS "WINSLOW MANOR."

BASHFORD: WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT.

SYBIL: AND IF ANYONE IS GOING TO TAKE OVER, IT'S ME AND REGGIE! AFTER ALL, WE OWN 25%.

REGGIE: SHE'S RIGHT YOU KNOW.

BASHFORD: (*AS THE LIGHTS GO UP*) AH! THERE'S THE LIGHTS.
(*TO THE CROWD*)
WON'T YOU JOIN ME?

MALCOLM: IS HE REALLY TAKING OVER, DADDY?

THADDEUS: OVER MY DEAD BODY!

SYBIL: SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.

REGGIE: GET HIM, MUMMY! GET HIM!

(BILL RETURNS TO HELP REMOVE THE BODY WHICH, WITH FANNY'S HELP, BECOMES AN AWKWARD PROCESS. ALL BEGIN DINING AMID GREAT THREATS, ANTAGONISM, AND SCHEMING. THE WHOLE FEELING OF DINNER SHOULD BE MANIC.)

3 -- DINNER

(DURING DINNER, THE CHARACTERS ARE EXTREMELY WATCHFUL, ADDRESSING ONE ANOTHER ONLY FROM A DISTANCE. AT LEAST THREE TIMES, BASHFORD DROPS OFF INTO ONE OF HIS LITTLE CATNAPS. EACH TIME, THE VARIOUS CHARACTERS APPROACH AND DEAL WITH HIM IN THE FOLLOWING MANNERS: CYCLE 1 – REGGIE TAKES HIS PLATE, EATS PART OF IT, AND REPLACES IT IN FRONT OF HIM WITHOUT AWAKENING HIM; BILL JOLTS HIM AWAKE BY SMACKING HIM ROUGHLY ON THE BACK, JOSTLING HIM, AND ASKING ABOUT THE DIAMOND; CYCLE 2 – SYBIL TAKES HIS WATER GLASS, SLAPS HIS FACE, MAKES HIM DRINK SOME OF THE WATER, AND ASKS HIM ABOUT THE DIAMOND; CYCLE 3 THADDEUS TRIES TO DIVERT THE ATTENTION OF THE DINERS AT BASHFORD'S TABLE IN ORDER TO STRANGLE BASHFORD BUT EVENTUALLY IS INTERRUPTED BY...; MALCOLM, WHO PLACES HIS HANDS ON HIM AND TRIES TO GET A READING FROM HIS "COSMIC VIBRATIONS"; FANNY PULLS HIM UP AND AWAKENS HIM BY KISSING HIM FULL ON THE MOUTH, THEN ASKS ABOUT THE DIAMOND. EVENTUALLY BASHFORD BEGINS)

15 more pages to the end of the script which will include:

3 -- AFTER DINNER

4 -- RAMBLES

5 -- RESOLUTION

6 -- CURTAIN CALL

7 -- MASTER DETECTIVE ANNOUNCEMENT

SLEUTHING SHEET -- An Heir Of Mystery

- 1- Who killed Pippa Winslow?**

- 2- Who killed Jonathan Bashford?**

- 3- Who killed Thaddeus Winslow?**

- 4- Who killed Malcolm Winslow?**

- 5- Was Hamilton Winslow murdered?**

- 6- Where was the Winslow Diamond?**

- 7- What happened to Thaddeus' wife?**

- 8- What happened to Sybil's husband?**

- 9- What is important about the ring which Reggie found?**

- 10- What is the answer to the Secret Clue?**

An Heir of Mystery -- Instructions and individual letters

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