

PSYCHIC CONNECTIONS

by

Philip Ayckbourn

Agent: Richard Ireson
The Narrow Road Company

1st Floor
37 Great Queen Street
London,
WC2B 5AA

T 020 7831 4450
E richardireson@narrowroad.co.uk
www.narrowroad.co.uk

Characters:

Cast of 4 (1M 3F)

TRISHA WATKINS – early-forties

CRAIG PHILLIPS – mid-thirties

OLLIE REEVES – early-thirties

EMILY REEVES – late twenties

ALICE STOKES – late-twenties (played by actor who plays Emily)

BENJAMIN STOKES – mid-thirties (played by actor who plays Craig)

MARTHA JENNINGS – early-thirties (played by actor who plays Ollie)

Synopsis of scenes:

Act 1

Scene 1 – Present day. Saturday 1.45 p.m.

Scene 2 – Present day. Saturday 2.15 p.m.

Scene 3 – Present day. Saturday 3.00 p.m.

Scene 4 – 1866. Saturday 3.15 p.m.

Scene 5 – Present day. Saturday 3.30 p.m.

Scene 6 – 1866. Sunday Midday. Two weeks later.

Scene 7 – Present day. Saturday 3.45 p.m./1866. Sunday 12.15 p.m.

Act 2

Scene 1 – Action continues from Act 1.

Scene 2 – 1866. Saturday 4.15 p.m.

Scene 3 – Present day. Saturday 4.10 p.m./1866. Saturday 4.30 p.m.

Scene 4 – 1866. Saturday 10.30 p.m.

Scene 5 – Present day. Saturday 4.25 p.m.

Scene 6 – 1867. Saturday 10.30 p.m.

Scene 7 – 1867. Some months later. Evening.

Scene 8 – 1867. Some weeks later. Evening.

Scene 9 – 1867. Some weeks later. Evening.

Scene 10 – Present day. Saturday 4.55 p.m.

Scene 11 – Present day. Saturday 5.00 p.m.

Place – Hall in The Old School House.

Time – Present day and mid eighteen-sixties.

Act 1

Scene 1

Present day. Saturday 1.45 p.m.

The hall in The Old School House is spacious and hasn't been altered since its Victorian heyday. High up on the US stone wall is a carved school motto that reads 'Omnia Bona Bonis' and a date below that reads A.D. 1861. There is a large fireplace recess on the SL wall with a fire poker nearby. There is no furniture in the room except for a couple of old period wooden chairs and a table. There is a closed door on the SR wall and another closed door on the US wall. A stairway climbs up the US wall and leads to a closed mezzanine door half way up. Every noise heard off SR such as calling or sound of front door or other sounds reverberates in the hallway.

EMILY stands in the centre of the room facing upstage. She wears a Victorian nightdress. She surveys the room and the air above her in a tense and uncertain way. We do not see her face. She takes a sharp intake of breath.

Blackout.

Scene 2

Present day. Saturday 2.15 p.m.

Sound of a front door off.

CRAIG: *(Off. Calling.) Hello? Hello?*

The SR door opens.

Hello?

CRAIG enters. He crosses to the US door. He opens it.

(Calling off.) Hello? Anyone here?

He shuts the US door. He looks up to the mezzanine door.

Hello? Anyone there?

He checks his mobile. He feels a chill and shivers. He crosses to the SR door.

(Calling off.) Hello?

CRAIG closes the door. He crosses to a chair and sits. He takes out a hip flask and has a couple of swigs. He puts the flask away and starts to play a game on his mobile. Gunshot effects are heard from the game. He dies in his game, much to his annoyance. The faint sound of a woman sobbing is heard. It seems to be coming from behind the mezzanine door at the top of the stairs.

(Calling up.) Hello? Anyone there? Hello?

CRAIG ascends the stairs. He reaches the mezzanine door. The sobbing stops.

Hello?

Sound of a front door off. CRAIG tries the mezzanine door. It's locked. He starts to descend the stairs. There is a knocking on the SR door. The door opens and OLLIE enters.

OLLIE: Hi. I'm Ollie. I'm guessing this is the right room. Are you one of the technicians?

CRAIG: No, I'm Craig.

OLLIE: Craig?

CRAIG: Craig Phillips.

OLLIE: *(Shocked.)* Craig...!

CRAIG: Well, well.

OLLIE: What are you...! What are *you* doing here!

CRAIG: Don't I get a 'how are you?'.

OLLIE: What are you *doing* here?

CRAIG: I guess not.

OLLIE: Are you...? You're not... are you? No... she would've said.

CRAIG: She didn't tell me either... about you.

OLLIE: Is she here?

CRAIG: Haven't seen her.

OLLIE takes out her mobile and dials.

OLLIE: *(To TRISHA's voicemail.)* Hi, it's Ollie, I'm at the house. There's someone else here – someone I know – knew. I just thought I was going to be doing this alone, one to one. Well... I'll see you soon... hopefully.

OLLIE hangs up.

No, you're just here as one of the technicians, aren't you? You're just playing with me... like you're good at.

CRAIG: Maybe *you're* a techie playing with me – double bluff.

OLLIE: I want you to go. I'm sure someone can cover for you.

CRAIG: I ain't going nowhere, unless you want to pay me what she's paying me for being here... to go. How much is she paying you?

OLLIE: Where's the rest of the crew?

CRAIG: You're still thinking I'm one of the techies.

OLLIE: I mean it, I'm not doing this with you here.

CRAIG: Bye bye then. Don't forget to close the door, there's a bit of a draught.

OLLIE's mobile beeps. This is shortly followed by CRAIG's. They check mobiles.

Her? What does yours say? Mine says: *(Reading text.)* Sorry, stuck in traffic, make yourselves at home, smiley face. Talk amongst yourselves. T. Kiss. *(To OLLIE.)* Snap? Believe me now?

OLLIE: What did she say to you?

CRAIG: Say?

OLLIE: When she contacted you.

CRAIG: She said a few things... 'hello' ... 'how are you' –

OLLIE: No, I mean about why she wanted you here.

CRAIG: She probably said what she said to you about why she wanted *you* here... I'm guessing. How are you?

OLLIE: What do you care?

CRAIG: Married? Kids? Okay, I get it, you're still upset with me... after all these years. Nice place here, cosy. (*Reading inscription.*) Omnia Bona Bonis. Sounds rude. Any ideas? No? No, she said I had a connection to the place... in a past life.

OLLIE: Did she say who?

CRAIG: She may've done, she mentioned a few names. I wasn't really paying attention. My ears pricked up when she talked about the money. Five g for coming here to be 'regressed' for a couple of hours. What's there not to like, eh? Is that what she's paying you?

There is the distant sound of a bell ringing, like a school bell. It stops. A door slams somewhere in the building. OLLIE crosses to the SR door and looks off.

OLLIE: (*Calling off.*) Hello? Anyone there? Trisha Watkins? Hello?

OLLIE turns back into the room.

CRAIG: Getting spooked?

OLLIE crosses to the US door. She opens it.

OLLIE: (*Calling off.*) Hello? Hello?

CRAIG: I've done that.

OLLIE closes the US door and starts to ascend the stairs.

CRAIG: Done that too.

OLLIE continues to ascend. She stands at the mezzanine door.

It's locked.

She tries the door handle.

Told you.

CRAIG feels the draught and closes the SR door.

She said it was haunted, this place. Tell you something if I were a ghostie, you wouldn't catch me dead in a place like this. Get it? Wouldn't catch me dead...

CRAIG takes out his hip flask.

OLLIE: What's that, booze?

CRAIG: A little pick me up. Want some? It'll settle your nerves.

CRAIG has a swig or two and puts the flask away.

What about you then?

OLLIE: What?

CRAIG: Who did she say you were here – in another life? Hey, maybe you and I were here together. Maybe we were married even.

OLLIE: I doubt that.

CRAIG: Who was he – what's his face – the headmaster? Barnaby? And her – what's her name? Adele, was it?

OLLIE: No.

CRAIG: Well, we were together in this life so... I think that's it, I was him and you were her and that's why we're here now, to 'connect' with them and... put them on TV, the internet, or whatever she's planning to do with this show. Does anyone watch these ghostie shows anymore? I thought they'd been done to death. Get it, done to death. I'm on fire today.

OLLIE: *(Dryly and more to herself.)* I wish you were. No, you couldn't have been him – Benjamin Stokes, by the way.

CRAIG: That's him. Why not?

OLLIE: Because he was the headmaster of the school here.

CRAIG: And your point being?

OLLIE: He was someone who spent his life devoted to the pursuit of education.

CRAIG: And your point being?

OLLIE: 'To the good all things are good'.

CRAIG: Sorry?

OLLIE: Omnia Bona Bonus.

CRAIG: Okay, Miss Smartass – Mrs? Who do *you* think I was?

OLLIE: No idea.

CRAIG: Have a guess, an *educated* one. I must have something to do with this place or I wouldn't be here would I.

OLLIE: Janitor, grounds-man... P.E. teacher perhaps.

CRAIG: Okay, so Trisha Watkins wants to regress me to find out more about the P.E. teacher. What do you think she's got in mind there? Oh, unless she thinks I was somehow responsible for Adele's death by constantly bouncing a basketball on the ceiling beneath her bedroom floor, driving her to take a gun and shoot herself. That's how she died wasn't it?

OLLIE: Alice.

CRAIG: Whatever. (*Mimes bouncing basketball.*) Boof, boof, boof!... Boof, boof, boof!... Boof, boof –

OLLIE: Okay!

CRAIG: See.

There is the faint sound of a man and woman arguing that seems to come through the fireplace. The words are indecipherable. The sound fades. CRAIG crosses to the fireplace. He looks into the chimney.

Hello? Any ghosties up there? No, must be techies... somewhere. (*Calling up chimney.*) Techies, keep it down please. (*To OLLIE.*) Look at you. Wooooo!

OLLIE: Stop that!

CRAIG: Wooooo!

OLLIE: (*More to herself.*) What did I ever see in you?

CRAIG: Devilish good looks, manliness, witty, big cock.

OLLIE: I feel sick just thinking about it.

CRAIG: It's not what you said back then.

OLLIE: Looking at you now.

CRAIG: Well we've all matured a little, even you have got a few more lines on that once fresh-faced complexion of yours. None of us are immune, Toots.

OLLIE: Don't call me that please.

CRAIG: Toots?

OLLIE: I never liked it then and I like it even less now.

CRAIG: Term of endearment.

OLLIE: Not to me it isn't.

CRAIG: Is to me. Okay, if you say so... Toots – kidding. You did have more of a sense of humour back then... *sometimes*. So not married, I'm guessing... or kids, I'm guessing. Boyfriend? You haven't changed sides have you?

OLLIE: What?

CRAIG: You know, batting for the other team now.

OLLIE: No, I'm not for your information, but if I was you'd certainly have been responsible for it.

There is the distant sound of the school bell ringing once more. It stops.

CRAIG: More ghosties. Tell you what, I'll go this time. I'm not scared. It takes more than a ghostly ringing bell in a spooky, haunted old schoolhouse to scare me. See you soon. Unless you don't want to be left alone. You want me to stay here with you and hold your hand?

OLLIE: Fuck off!

CRAIG: I'll take that as a no.

CRAIG crosses to the SL door. He opens it and looks off.

(Calling off.) Any spookies out there?

CRAIG exits through the SR door. He closes the door behind him.

OLLIE: *(To herself.)* Jesus!

OLLIE checks her mobile. The faint sound of the woman sobbing is heard again. Once more it seems to be coming from behind the mezzanine door at the top of the stairs. OLLIE looks towards the door.

Alice?

OLLIE tentatively ascends the stairs.

Alice, is that you?

She reaches the top of the stairs. The sobbing stops.

Hello?

A scratching sound is heard on the US door.

(Calling to US door.) Hello?

The scratching sound continues. OLLIE descends the stairs.

Hello? Who's there?

She crosses to the US door.

Hello?

OLLIE reaches out to the door handle. The US door suddenly opens. CRAIG puts his head round it.

CRAIG: Boo!

OLLIE: Oh! You... fucker!

CRAIG: Couldn't resist it.

OLLIE takes an asthma inhaler from her bag and uses it.

(Asthma.) Still got that. No ghosties around or techies, none that I could see. Breathe, it'll help.

OLLIE: Piss off!

CRAIG takes out his hip flask.

CRAIG: Sure you don't want some of this?

CRAIG drinks and puts the flask away.

Maybe we've got the wrong place. Here we are waiting here in this old haunted school house when really we should be in the old haunted school house up the road. The one with cameras, lights, techies and *her* standing there wondering where we are.

OLLIE: Feel free to go and find out.

CRAIG: Come on, Toots – sorry, Ollie – let's bury the hatchet, yeah? It's been... what twelve, thirteen years? Water under the bridge now.

CRAIG offers his hand.

OLLIE: There's only one place where I'd like to bury the hatchet and that's squarely between your eyes.

CRAIG: Okay. Don't say I didn't offer.

OLLIE: You were a complete bastard. I'm not going to just turn round now and say what you did was fine, no problem, you were just exercising your God given right as oversexed, red-bloodied, twenty-something male by screwing every piece of skirt behind my back that would have you.

CRAIG: Don't forget you taught me. It was alright for you to pinch me from baby sis without a glimmer of guilt. I'm sure she still wants to bury the hatchet firmly between your eyes for that. You heard from her? No? You haven't kissed and made up then?

OLLIE: Yes, we have actually.

CRAIG: No you haven't.

OLLIE: What?

CRAIG: I said no you haven't.

OLLIE: How do you know? Have you spoken to her? Have you? Where is she? Is she okay?

CRAIG: What do you care?

OLLIE: Where is she? Craig?

There is the is sound of a door off.

CRAIG: There's our ghosties again. Make sure they're not trying to creep up on us, shall we.

OLLIE: Craig?

CRAIG crosses to the chimney.

CRAIG: No ghosties up there. (*Mezzanine door.*) We know that door's locked – although that shouldn't really bother a ghost.

OLLIE: Where's Emily, Craig?

CRAIG crosses to the US door and opens it.

CRAIG: No.

CRAIG closes the US door. He then crosses to the SR door.

OLLIE: Tell me!

CRAIG: The thing about ghosties is they're quite crafty, they make you think they're in one place when really they're hiding...

CRAIG quickly opens the SR door. TRISHA stands on the other side of the door, just about to enter. She wears a Victorian period outfit.

Jesus!

TRISHA: No, Trisha Watkins. Sorry, didn't mean to startle you. Apologies for keeping you both waiting. (*Greeting.*) Ollie. Mmm, what's that I'm getting, jasmine is it? Craig. I'm getting... whisky, is it? So, what do you think, suitably atmospheric, isn't it.

OLLIE: It's just that I thought I would be doing this alone.

CRAIG: So did I.

TRISHA: I'm sorry I didn't tell you. Knowing your 'connection' to each other I was afraid one or both of you might not come.

OLLIE: You knew we were – ?

TRISHA: Yes. My guides told me... in a manner of speaking. It's necessary for what we're attempting to do here today that you're both here. You both have a connection to the place here – in another life that is – a strong one.

CRAIG: (*To OLLIE.*) Told you.

OLLIE: He thinks he was Benjamin Stokes. Is that true?

TRISHA: That's what we're here to find out.

OLLIE: But can't your guides tell you? If they told you how to find us and how we were connected in *this* life, surely they could tell you who we were in another.

TRISHA: You'd think, but not so. Perhaps they don't want to ruin the programme for us. Let the living do a bit of the legwork, eh?

CRAIG: So where's your crew hiding?

TRISHA: Been and gone.

CRAIG: What?

TRISHA: I don't like anyone around except the people directly involved, energetically it influences the process.

OLLIE: So...?

TRISHA: The cameras are being operated remotely. (*Scanning the room.*) It's amazing how well they manage to conceal them.

CRAIG: There's cameras hidden in the walls?

OLLIE: We're being filmed now?

TRISHA: Since you arrived. I wanted to catch your meeting. It's alright, I won't include anything you're not both one hundred percent okay with. It is about you after all, you're the stars of the show... for this particular episode.

OLLIE: I heard her – Alice, her crying coming from behind that door.

CRAIG: When?

OLLIE: You were out the room. That's what's been reported, right?

TRISHA: That's correct.

CRAIG: Techies setting up.

OLLIE: Crying?

CRAIG: A sensitive techie. Maybe she just split up with her boyfriend.

OLLIE: Maybe it was Alice. It's what people have heard.

CRAIG: What people?

OLLIE: People who've stayed here.

CRAIG: What in this five star hotel?

OLLIE: People who came here for shelter, overnight.

CRAIG: Tramps.

OLLIE: Travellers.

CRAIG: Tramps.

OLLIE: Just because they were homeless it doesn't invalidate what they heard... or saw.

CRAIG: Saw?

OLLIE: The bloody figure of Alice.

CRAIG: Really. Enough meths and anyone can see and hear anything.

OLLIE: *(To TRISHA.)* We heard other sounds too – coming from the fireplace. It sounded like a couple of people arguing, a man and a woman. We couldn't make out what they were saying.
(CRAIG.) He heard that.

CRAIG: Tecchies arguing.

TRISHA: I knew this would be interesting with you two here.

OLLIE: That's not been heard before?

TRISHA: Not that I know of. Probably filtering down from upstairs.

OLLIE: What's upstairs?

TRISHA: It was the master bedroom.

CRAIG: Maybe it's a couple of tramps bedding down for the night – day – squabbling over the duvet.

OLLIE: Maybe you should go and find out.

CRAIG: It's locked, remember?

TRISHA: And we've been warned not to go up there, the floorboards are precarious, a person could come crashing through and we wouldn't want that, would we?

OLLIE: (CRAIG.) Wouldn't we? (To TRISHA.) Benjamin and Alice or...?

TRISHA: Benjamin and Martha possibly. When I came here last summer with the Haunted Abodes team there were definitely other presences we picked up here, although we were mainly focussing on Alice at the time, since she's the one who's made her presence known most, so to speak.

OLLIE: Did your guides say anything about – ?

CRAIG: Look, don't want to hurry things along but how long's this gonna take? It's just that I have something I could fit in later if –

TRISHA: It's going to take as long as it takes, Craig, I'm afraid, so my advice to you is not to make any hard and fast plans – although I'll try not to keep you later than six as promised. We'd certainly be losing the light by then. So let's crack on, shall we, and get you into your costumes.

CRAIG: Costumes?

TRISHA: I did mention, Craig, when we met.

CRAIG: Did you?

TRISHA: Yes, I did.

OLLIE: He wasn't listening.

CRAIG: What kind of costumes?

TRISHA: The kind of thing they wore in the eighteen-sixties in Victorian England. For my viewers someone being regressed isn't the most exciting thing in the world, one has to do what one can to spice things up a bit. Me too, I don't normally go about dressed like this you know. It was the reason I asked for your measurements.

CRAIG: I thought that was for camera angles.

TRISHA: Camera angles?

OLLIE: We have separate changing rooms, right?

TRISHA: Yes, yours is out there, *first* door on the left, Ollie.

OLLIE exits through the SR door.

CRAIG: And you're not going to make me do anything stupid?

TRISHA: Stupid?

CRAIG: You know, like those hypnotist shows where they get you to do crazy things like... pretending to have sex with a chair while... singing the national anthem, or something.

TRISHA: Fear not, Craig, it's not one of those shows. And, like I say, anything you deeply object to can stay on the cutting room floor – so to speak. I'm sure you'll get into the spirit of it, Craig, if you'll pardon the pun. *Second* door on your left. Oh, and can I have what's in your pocket please, Craig? I'm all for encouraging my participants to connect with the spirits on this show, but not the bottled kind.

CRAIG: *(Taking out hip flask.)* This you mean? It's for medicinal purposes... bad chest.

TRISHA: I think we both know that's not true, Craig.

CRAIG: Don't worry, I won't touch it.

TRISHA: Just for a few hours, please. It won't kill you.

CRAIG gives the flask to TRISHA.

Thank you. And could you close this door after you, please.

CRAIG exits through the SR door, closing it behind him. TRISHA puts CRAIG's hip flask into her bag. She takes her mobile and dials.

(To mobile.) Hi, okay?... They're just getting changed... I know... Yes... You're doing very well... Yes... Just be careful... Try not to, too much... Yes... Look, I ought to... I will... Yes... I will... Bye.

TRISHA hangs up. She scans the air above her. She ascends the stairs. At the mezzanine door she reaches out and places her hand on the door. Her breathing intensifies as she feels the presence of ALICE. TRISHA sighs heavily. She suddenly looks back into the room as she becomes aware of another presence there.

Jacob? It's time now, Jacob, it's time.

Blackout.

Scene 3

Present day. Saturday 3.00 p.m.

The SR door opens. CRAIG puts his head round. He enters. He is wearing a Victorian period outfit in which he is visibly uncomfortable. He looks about the walls seeing if he can spot the cameras. He can't and so gives up. He crosses to a chair and sits. He takes out his mobile and checks it. He resumes playing his game. Gunshot effects are heard. He dies in his game, again. OLLIE enters SR also in a Victorian period outfit. CRAIG gives a whistle.

CRAIG: Sexy!

OLLIE: Where's Trisha?

CRAIG: No idea. Maybe the ghosties have got her.

OLLIE: Where is she, Craig?

CRAIG: Like I say, she might've been –

OLLIE: No, where's Emily?

CRAIG: I don't know.

OLLIE: Craig, where is she?

CRAIG: I don't know!

OLLIE: When did you last see her?

CRAIG: When I last saw her. Like I say, what do you care?

OLLIE: Of course I care, she's my sister.

CRAIG: That's not what you said back then, you were happy to see her off the premises... back then.

OLLIE: No thanks to you.

CRAIG: Oh, you're blaming me now for it, are you? No, she was your young, vulnerable, little sis, the one you were supposed to be taking care of since your parents were no more and you let her run off into a life filled with drugs, destitution and men who wanted to do all kinds of despicable things to her, just so you could get it on with her man. It was lucky I found her again, she wasn't in a good way, I can tell you.

OLLIE: Where did you find her?

CRAIG: In a place where she shouldn't have been.

OLLIE: Where? So where is she now?

CRAIG: Are you deaf? Read my lips, I don't know. She disappeared into thin air... again. She's got a habit of doing that, hasn't she.

OLLIE: You were the one that got her hooked, that wasn't –

CRAIG: You were just as influential as I was... and you know it.

OLLIE: Did she say anything about me?

CRAIG: Yes, but it's unrepeatable... especially in front of the cameras... wherever they are. They have hidden them pretty well, I must say, and I'm quite good at spotting things like that. (*Tight.*) These trousers. No wonder they had a problem with sex in those days, having to wear these. I don't think the P.E. teacher would be wearing this somehow, even back in those days. Not good for circuit training this gear. No, I'm pretty sure she's dressed me up like this because she reckons I was Mr Stokes – Benny. No, I may not be Mr Academic in this life, but if Benny was anything like me in a past life he'd have kept a tight ship. They'd be no messing around if I were in charge. It'll be pants down and six of the best – girls too, I'm not sexist. No preferential treatment for girls.

OLLIE: I'm sure you'd enjoy that.

CRAIG: I'd enjoy the fact that they'd be very well behaved.

OLLIE: Out of fear.

CRAIG: Out of respect.

OLLIE: I disagree.

CRAIG: Ever wondered why kids are like they are nowadays? Look no further. Spare the rod spoil the child. That should've been the motto up there, not all this 'to the good...' crap. My dad kept me squarely in line with his slipper. I can still feel it now.

OLLIE: (*Dryly.*) And that was a success.

CRAIG: It was, God knows what I would've got up to if he let me off the hook. Boys will be boys... and girls will be girls. No word from the chimney again I take it... now the techies have gone.

You believe in them do you – ghosties? Not me. No, to me once you're dead you're dead. Once your brain's frizzled up into dust that's you gone – sayonara amigo. Although, I do feel a certain 'connection' to Roman times – don't ask me what it is – maybe just stuff I read at school got lodged up here somewhere. Centurions, gladiators, all that shit. Maybe I was a Roman Emperor in another 'nother life – when I wasn't Benny. What about you? Cleopatra? She's a popular one to be, so she's probably taken. Every woman wants to be her, don't they. Maybe having all those young Egyptian slaves looking after you in the bath. If I were her I'd never get out. Asses milk wasn't it? Or was it –

OLLIE: I'm more interested in what connection I have to this place and as far as I know Cleopatra never lived here.

CRAIG: She may've stayed a weekend. (*Calling out to where he imagines the cameras.*) Hey you losers, turn over, Top Gear's on the other side.

TRISHA enters through the SR door.

TRISHA: Sorry, had to go and check on something technical. Well, look at you two.

OLLIE: How could they wear this?

TRISHA: That's actually quite loose. The rule for women was in those days: if you could breathe it wasn't tight enough.

CRAIG: Does that apply to bloke's trousers too?

OLLIE: I wish it were medieval times we were trying to connect with then all I'd have to wear is a tunic or something.

CRAIG: Yeah, but then you wouldn't look so hot, Toots.

OLLIE: I said don't call me that... please.

CRAIG: Sorry, Olivia.

TRISHA: Craig perhaps you can help me with something.

TRISHA opens the US door.

If you could grab the other end of this chaise.

CRAIG: Chaise?

TRISHA: Like a settee.

*TRISHA exits through the US door. CRAIG follows.
They enter carrying a chaise-longue.*

CRAIG: Do I get paid extra for this?

TRISHA: I'm afraid not, Craig, this is just a goodwill gesture. Over there please.

CRAIG: I'll sue if I have an accident, which is highly possible in these trousers.

TRISHA: Just here, thanks. Okay, a little period furnishing and a comfy place to regress. Okay, for the moment, let's have Ollie sitting on the chaise and Craig in the chair.

OLLIE: I'm really not comfortable about us doing this together.

CRAIG: Cheer up Florence Nightingale it might be fun.

TRISHA: You won't be, don't worry, Ollie. I'll regress you both separately, but first I need to introduce you both – together. So, are we sitting comfortably?

CRAIG: No.

TRISHA: As comfortably as we can.

CRAIG: Still no.

TRISHA: I'll give a brief intro to the episode before I introduce you both, I'll ask you a couple of questions and then we'll get going. Just act naturally.

CRAIG: What, in these trousers!

TRISHA prepares herself. She faces out.

TRISHA: *(To camera.)* So, welcome people to the first in a new series of mine called *Psychic Connections*. I'm Trisha Watkins and I'm at The Old School House near Cranleigh in Surrey, which over the years has been subject to many reports of paranormal goings on.

CRAIG: *(Ghost noise.)* Woooooo!

TRISHA: Thank you, Craig, I'll let you know if I need sound effects. *(To camera.)* Some of you indeed may remember it from when I visited here with the Haunted Abodes team. The team attempted – unsuccessfully then – to contact Alice Stokes, the

woman who died here in eighteen sixty-six and whose ghost has been seen: a sad figure still bleeding from her gun shot wound that tragically ended her young life. For those of you who didn't catch the Haunted Abodes episode allow me to give you a little background history. Alice Stokes was born in eighteen forty-one to Jacob and Sarah Tilbury. After her mother's untimely death, Jacob decided to invest a good sum of money into the building and setting up of the school here and a further sizeable sum to be employed, exclusively by Alice, for its maintenance and prudent running. Alice married Benjamin Stokes, a young teacher who, after Jacob's illness and eventual passing – in one of the upstairs rooms here – took over as headmaster of this flourishing Victorian establishment. All was well in the school and in the marriage of Benjamin and Alice until the arrival of one Martha Jennings, a new teacher, with whom Benjamin fell passionately in love. Together they hatched a cruel plan to psychologically unhinge the vulnerable Alice in an attempt to have her put away in an asylum. An amicable separation wasn't an option in those days – not a respectable one anyway – also there were certain inheritance stipulations to be hurdled. Alice however took her own life before their wicked scheme could be realised – saving them the trouble – and Benjamin and Martha lived on in this place, frittering away the money left by Alice's father. The school closed, Benjamin died a couple of years later from consumption and Martha remained here until her own death in eighteen sixty-nine when a fire ravaged the upstairs rooms. The only reason this place is still standing today was because of the heavy storm, reported that night, which dowsed the flames. Martha was not so lucky, her half-charred body was found the following day and since then the place has neither been developed nor lived in. The odd traveller and occasional ghost hunter has given us their accounts of the sounds and the sightings of Alice. And it's fortunate that we can be here today, for soon this place will finally be razed to the ground to make way for a new road.

CRAIG: Pity eh.

TRISHA: So, on to Psychic Connections. The premise of this programme is for invited guests to make a connection – or a *re*-connection, I should say – between the world of the living and the world of the 'so called' dead – for dead is not dead as we know it – as *I* know it anyway. In my understanding we have all lived before and carry the unremembered memory of not just one, but indeed many former lives, some of them calm, relatively uneventful perhaps, while others have been turbulent, violent, perhaps cut short by... well, any number of possible things.

CRAIG: Constricted goolies?

TRISHA: Thank you, Craig. *(To camera.)* Sometimes we leave behind a trapped and unresolved part of us, a spirit, ghost – whatever we may call it – that seeks to be – indeed, often cries out to be – liberated from a place such as this.

CRAIG: I know how they feel. Just trying to lighten the mood.

TRISHA: Thanks, Craig, but if the mood needs lightening I'll lighten it.

CRAIG: You's the boss, lady.

TRISHA: *(To camera.)* The process I'll be using to help my guests reconnect with their possible past selves is through deep subconscious hypnosis. So... this is probably a good moment to introduce my two guests for this episode, Ollie Reeves and Craig Phillips. Welcome both to Psychic Connections.

CRAIG: Afternoon.

TRISHA: *(To camera.)* As you see they have both sportingly joined me by dressing up in period costume of the time.

CRAIG: I won't be doing much sport in these trousers.

TRISHA: My guides helped me to locate Craig and Ollie and I'm quite confident they both have a significant connection to the place here – in another life that is – but what, and who, as yet I know not. Hopefully all will become clear. First let me ask you – Ollie, Craig – how you felt when you arrived at The Old School House here? Did anything about it feel *familiar* perhaps? Ollie, let's start with you.

OLLIE: I would say... yes, it did.

TRISHA: Any sense of what possible connection you could have had to this place?

OLLIE: I'm... not sure.

TRISHA: Craig, what about you?

CRAIG: Well... I know this may sound crazy, but I'm getting a strong sense of a... a basketball.

TRISHA: A basketball?

CRAIG: Could I have possibly been something to do with the gym here? P.E. teacher perhaps?

TRISHA: I don't think –

OLLIE: He's being facetious.

CRAIG: It's a little joke we're sharing. No, I think I was him – Benjamin Stokes, the headmaster. I'm guessing *she* thinks she was Alice – my wife, but she doesn't want to accept that so she's relegated me to being the P.E teacher.

TRISHA: Do you think you could've been Alice, Ollie?

OLLIE: No... no, I don't.

CRAIG: I guess it would also mean I cheated on you and tried to get you banged up in the nut house.

OLLIE: I don't think I was her, okay!

CRAIG: Okay... then maybe *you* we're the P.E teacher. Netball, they'd have probably done that, right?

TRISHA: I think we're getting off track here. Let's steer things back.

OLLIE: Let's.

TRISHA: You've both heard noises since you've been here, hopefully we would've caught that on camera. Can you briefly describe what you heard?

OLLIE: The sound of a woman crying, sobbing behind that door up there.

CRAIG: Techie.

OLLIE: Voices of a man and woman arguing, coming through the fireplace there.

CRAIG: Techies. Oh, don't forget the techie ringing the bell.

OLLIE: The sound of a bell ringing, like a school bell.

TRISHA: Interesting.

CRAIG: (*Miming ringing a bell.*) Tea's up techies.

TRISHA: Thank you both – Ollie, Craig – I think we're ready to start. Okay, the idea is to do you both in turn starting with you, Ollie. We'll have you lying down on here, head this way, so we've got the best camera angle on you.

OLLIE: Is he going to be in the room?

CRAIG: Who's *he*, the dog's dad?

OLLIE: Is he?

TRISHA: No, we'll put Craig backstage, as it were. Craig, perhaps you'd like to go for a little walkabout. Not too far away – not that you probably will dressed like that. Take your mobile and I'll call you when I'm ready for you.

CRAIG: Have fun, Olivia.

CRAIG mimes bouncing a basketball as he crosses to the door.

Boof! Boof! Boof!

At the door he shoots an imaginary hoop. He exits through the SR door, closing it behind him.

OLLIE: God!

TRISHA: Just try to block him out, Ollie.

OLLIE: I wish it was that simple. Was he? Was he Benjamin Stokes?

TRISHA: Like I say, I haven't been given that information. I've just been told it's vital for him to be here, as it is for you, Ollie.

OLLIE: Her crying – Alice's – if it was Alice – it sounded so... so forlorn, so... pitiful. It was her, wasn't it?

TRISHA: Yes.

OLLIE: And we can help her... help release her?

TRISHA: That's why we're doing this – chiefly, although there are other spirits here, just as tormented that need to be set free. Well, you heard a couple of them through the fireplace.

OLLIE: Benjamin and Martha... you think?

TRISHA: Possibly, engaged in one of their many furious altercations.

OLLIE: And we're also doing this to... to help them?

TRISHA: We are.

OLLIE: Even though they've been cruel and sadistic in their lives, in what they did... to Alice?

TRISHA: We must be merciful. Mustn't we?

OLLIE: *(Distractedly.)* Yes.

TRISHA: Yes, Ollie?

OLLIE: I... I think I was... *her*.

TRISHA: Alice?

OLLIE: No, Martha, Martha Jennings.

TRISHA: Oh, interesting, what makes you think that?

OLLIE: Just... how things have been, the things I've... Let's say there's parallels, there's things I'm not proud of I've... Well, you no doubt know what they are.

TRISHA: I'm guessing.

OLLIE: You're guessing?

TRISHA: I'm guessing it may be to do with your sister.

OLLIE: Do *you* know where she is?

TRISHA: I do.

OLLIE: Where is she?

TRISHA: Let's discuss this after, shall we?

OLLIE: She's... okay, is she? She's still...?

TRISHA: Yes, she's very much still... now. But we can talk about that later, Ollie. For now I need you to relax, the best you can in that. Take some calming breaths – again the best you can – and when you're ready, lie down.

OLLIE does so. TRISHA takes out a crystal.

Okay, I will be using a combination of crystal energy and my voice in the process. Now, just let your mind go blank, the best you can. Let your thoughts pass like clouds in a clear blue sky. That's good. Now, I want you to see a cord that's attached to the base of your spine. And I want you to feel yourself being pulled, gently back, back... back... back through a long dark

tunnel. Back towards your past. Deep... deep... deep into your past. There may be images that appear... people... places. Just watch them pass by, as if you're a passenger on a bus gazing through the window as you go back... back... back into your childhood... a baby... and beyond, out of this life. A life before this one is starting to form around you. A life that's waking up from a deep... deep... sleep. Begin to feel the body you're in as your senses come alive... alive... alive. Are you feeling this?

OLLIE groans in acknowledgement.

Do you know where you are?

OLLIE groans again.

Yes? Are you in the School House here?

OLLIE nods.

What year? What year is this? Can you tell me? What year?

OLLIE: *(Mumbling.)* Eighteen... eighteen... sixty-six.

TRISHA: Eighteen sixty-six?

OLLIE groans.

Can you describe what you're feeling?

OLLIE groans again.

What is it? Are you seeing something? Someone?

OLLIE groans again.

Who is it you're seeing? Who's there? Who's there?

Blackout.

SFX of a dreamlike regression.

Scene 4

1866. Saturday 3.15 p.m.

ALICE lets out a scream.

Lights up.

TRISHA is gone. ALICE (played by the actor who plays

EMILY) sits up on the chaise-longue. BENJAMIN (played by the actor who plays CRAIG) stands by her. MARTHA (played by the actor who plays OLLIE) stands at the SR door.

ALICE: Benjamin, is that you? Oh, I fell asleep. I was having a nightmare.

BENJAMIN: So it appears.

ALICE: What time is it?

BENJAMIN: After three.

ALICE: Why didn't you wake me?

BENJAMIN: I was out, walking.

ALICE: Where?

BENJAMIN: By the river.

ALICE: Oh, I dreamt that you were trying to suffocate me... with a pillow from my bed. I was fighting you back. It was frightening, I –

BENJAMIN: Martha's here, Alice.

ALICE: Oh. Hello, Martha?

MARTHA: Hello, Alice.

ALICE: Surely you're not working, Martha, not on a weekend. You'll be accusing my husband and I of slave-driving our staff.

BENJAMIN: I met Martha coming back from my walk.

ALICE: I see. Well, we must have some tea together. I'll ask Edna to bring some up.

BENJAMIN: No, that won't be necessary... not just at the moment.

MARTHA: No tea for me thank you, Alice, I'm pleasantly refreshed after my walk. You're missing a beautiful afternoon, quite agreeable for this time of the year. The bluebells are out and looking quite glorious.

ALICE: Well, if my husband had woken me I'd happily have walked too.

BENJAMIN: It's good for you to rest, Alice.

ALICE: He worries about me too much.

BENJAMIN: And with good reason.

ALICE: Nonsense.

BENJAMIN: I've asked Martha to stay awhile.

ALICE: This evening?

BENJAMIN: For a few days, just until you're well again.

ALICE: Really, Benjamin, there's nothing wrong with me. A couple of disturbed nights, that's all.

BENJAMIN: More than a couple and more than disturbed. I've told Martha about your nightly activities.

ALICE: Have you?

BENJAMIN: She's concerned too. I told her I was thinking of calling Doctor Mulford, but she's persuaded me not to. She doesn't believe it's as serious as I think.

ALICE: It isn't, it really isn't.

BENJAMIN: Being woken up by nightly cries, finding you sleepwalking in a state of extreme agitation. (*To MARTHA.*) She thinks I'm making these things up.

ALICE: I just can't believe it's every night, especially since I see no evidence of it.

BENJAMIN: Well, you're asleep, what evidence can one see if one's asleep?

ALICE: I mean in the morning. There's no covers thrown off the bed, no doors left open, nothing disturbed or moved.

BENJAMIN: I said, I tidy up before you awake. This is precisely the reason I've asked Martha to stay, so it's not just your word against mine.

ALICE: I'm sure Martha has better things to do with her nights than to keep vigil over me.

BENJAMIN: It's either Martha or Doctor Mulford. If you carry on like this it's just a matter of time before you do yourself an injury... possibly a serious one.

ALICE: Really, Benjamin –

BENJAMIN: There's always the chance you could walk into something sharp or trip down some stairs and we wouldn't want that, would we?

MARTHA: I'm really quite happy to, Alice.

BENJAMIN: See. I'll have Edna prepare the guest room for Martha. You look so tired, my dear, and you're trembling like a little bird. I'm also concerned you're taking on too much. I want to lighten your work load –

ALICE: Benjamin –

BENJAMIN: Just for a little while. I think it's best if we share out some of your classes to other teachers, such as Mr Jessops, or even Martha here – if Martha doesn't mind taking on the extra work?

MARTHA: I'm here to help.

ALICE: Really, that won't be necessary.

BENJAMIN: Please don't argue with me, Alice. Just for a spell. It's your health we're talking about here and there's nothing more important than that. My advice now is to go upstairs to bed rather than catnapping down here. I'll ask Edna to make up a nice laudanum drink to help you go off.

ALICE: Maybe some air would do me good. Perhaps we could take a walk together instead.

BENJAMIN: No, you need proper rest now. As your husband and your headmaster I order you to bed, my dear.

ALICE: I know you're doing all this in loving care of me, Benjamin.

BENJAMIN: I am.

ALICE: Maybe I have been working a little too hard of late and some rest will be beneficial, but please don't think things are more serious than they are. I really don't want you to fret about me.

BENJAMIN: I'll call in on you before dinner. And you needn't worry about Martha saying anything to anyone about... anything she might happen to witness here of your –

MARTHA: No, fear not, I'm no Miss Tittle-Tattle. And while in your house I will be ruled absolutely by your husband... and

yourself of course. I can take my meals in my room when required and I can keep my own company quite happily.

ALICE: No, I won't hear of that. You'll dine with us, Martha, for the short time you're residing here.

BENJAMIN: Up you go, my dear. We need to arrange to have Martha's things brought over. I'll ask Edna to bring that drink up. I'll come to you anon.

ALICE ascends the stairs and exits through the mezzanine door. BENJAMIN seems thoughtful.

MARTHA: This is your cue to be happy, Benjamin. Benjamin?

BENJAMIN: I am. I am, Martha.

MARTHA: Good. I wouldn't like to think the man I love is going to blow hot and cold like an uncertain wind.

BENJAMIN: And I won't.

MARTHA: If I'm going to allow myself to be ruled, I want to be ruled by a strong master... *(Suggestively.)* and a firm one. I hope you can be firm, Benjamin, otherwise I might have to look for a firm master elsewhere.

BENJAMIN: Don't worry, I can be firm.

MARTHA: Good.

BENJAMIN: *(With passion for MARTHA.)* Oh...

MARTHA: *(Holding him back.)* First things first. She needs her laudanum.

BENJAMIN: Yes.

MARTHA: I'll go home and pack my things.

MARTHA exits through the SR door. BENJAMIN looks up to the mezzanine door and then exits through the US door.

Blackout.

Scene 5

Present day. Saturday 3.30 p.m.

OLLIE is lying once more on the chaise-longue.

TRISHA stands next to her. OLLIE sits up with a start.

OLLIE: What... is it finished?

TRISHA: Not yet.

OLLIE: I saw hands, a woman's hands... My... Martha's hands? And a face, a woman's face... Alice? Was I speaking?

TRISHA: A little.

OLLIE: What did I say?

TRISHA: I'd rather not give away anything too much just yet as it might influence the way you see things. Are you okay to continue?

OLLIE: That's what I'm here for.

TRISHA: Good. So, if you would just lie back again. That's it. Allow your mind to empty once more. Remember that clear blue sky. Let every thought go. Disappear into thin air. Good. Now, feel yourself being pulled back by that cord again. Back... back through that dark tunnel... back... back... back...

Blackout.

SFX of dreamlike regression.

Scene 6

1866. Sunday Midday. Two weeks later.

OLLIE and TRISHA are gone. BENJAMIN stands at the SR door having just entered. He closes the door behind him and looks up to the mezzanine door. There is the sound of breaking china from behind the US door.

BENJAMIN: *(Calling.)* Alice?

MARTHA enters through the US door. She holds a broken vase.

What happened?

MARTHA: This is what happened... during the night.

MARTHA gives the pieces of the vase to BENJAMIN.

Time to tell our patient about her troubled night... again. I'll prepare her morning drink and then we'll go for our ride.

MARTHA is about to exit through the US door.

BENJAMIN: Maybe we've... done enough.

MARTHA gives BENJAMIN an icy stare.

Just for the time being. I just want us to be... merciful. It hasn't been too long since the loss of her father and she –

MARTHA: I'm sure most husbands who want to slip free from their marital nooses are not half so merciful as you are, my dear Benjamin. Just think of some of the gruesome methods husbands have employed in the past... and wives too.

BENJAMIN: Yes, perhaps, but –

MARTHA: Vacillation, Benjamin, is a most unattractive quality... especially in a man.

BENJAMIN: Martha, listen to me, I'm just feeling –

MARTHA: What? Guilt? Shame? Pusillanimity?

BENJAMIN: Look –

MARTHA: What do you want, Benjamin? You can't have us both.

BENJAMIN: I –

MARTHA: You told me you were tiring of her. You told me her annoying little habits were grating on you. You told me her daily anxieties were taking their toll on your patience. You told me she lacked passion between the sheets.

BENJAMIN: Martha –

MARTHA: You told me a hundred things why you couldn't be with her and you wanted to be with me. You told me you loved me.

BENJAMIN: And I do. I do, Martha. I do.

MARTHA: It's important to see this through. For us, Benjamin, for our future life together. Yes? Yes?

BENJAMIN: Yes.

MARTHA: A little... *unpleasantness* now will pave the way for joy and pleasures to come. And there will be joy and pleasures, believe me.

BENJAMIN: I'll call on her.

MARTHA: No, (*Pieces of vase.*) leave that with me. You attend to the horses.

BENJAMIN notices a small phial in MARTHA's hand.

BENJAMIN: What's that?

MARTHA: It's... just a little additive to the laudanum that will help Doctor Mulford identify the tell tale symptoms of someone who needs to be protected from themselves.

BENJAMIN: But –

MARTHA: He'll take no interest in mere nocturnal wanderings and besides he will wish to witness them for himself – which will cause our story to come unstuck, since we can't make her sleepwalk.

BENJAMIN: Is it harmful?

MARTHA: Not in the slightest, I have that on good authority... so long as the proper dosage is given – which it will be. This is mercy. Trust me, she'll not suffer. Go! We'll ride to our new favourite spot... (*Suggestively.*) *Your* new favourite spot.

MARTHA exits through the US door. BENJAMIN puts the broken vase down and crosses to the SR door. The mezzanine door opens. ALICE stands at the doorway. She appears disoriented and confused.

ALICE: Benjamin?

BENJAMIN: Alice.

ALICE starts to descend the stairs.

ALICE: We must open up.

ALICE stumbles. BENJAMIN goes to help her.

BENJAMIN: Not today, Alice, it's Sunday.

ALICE: Sunday!

BENJAMIN: Yes.

ALICE: Then church.

BENJAMIN: Church has finished long ago.

ALICE: What time is it?

BENJAMIN: It's past midday.

ALICE: Why didn't somebody wake me?

BENJAMIN: You needed the rest.

ALICE: I do not need the rest! I need to be up, working, using my... my body... my mind.

BENJAMIN: And you will be, soon. You had another disturbed night.

ALICE: Another?

BENJAMIN: Sit down, my dear. Martha's preparing your drink.

ALICE: Why not Edna?

BENJAMIN: Edna's running some errands. Sit.

ALICE: How long has she been here for?

BENJAMIN: Edna?

ALICE: No, Martha. I've lost track of the days.

BENJAMIN: Two weeks, thereabouts. Two weeks and a day, to be precise. Come now, sit.

ALICE: You're not becoming...?

BENJAMIN: What?

ALICE: Enamoured of her, are you, Benjamin?

BENJAMIN: How could you... possibly... No, absolutely not. Put these foolish thoughts from your head at once, Alice.

ALICE: It's me you love, isn't it? Benjamin?

BENJAMIN: Alice –

ALICE: Please, tell me.

BENJAMIN: Look, this isn't –

ALICE: Please... tell me. I want to hear it.

BENJAMIN: I do. I do. There, happy now?

ALICE: Such care worn eyes. Smooth these brows of yours, Benjamin. You'll be old before your time.

BENJAMIN: It's only with concern for you. Oh, dear Alice –

MARTHA enters through the US door with ALICE's drink on a small tray.

MARTHA: Alice. You're up. I was about to bring this to you. I made it precisely to Edna's recipe.

BENJAMIN: Wouldn't it be better to enjoy it from the comfort of your bed, Alice? Wouldn't you advise that, Martha?

ALICE: That won't be necessary. I am not returning to my bed for another ten hours, at least.

ALICE drinks. It is evident she is becoming addicted to the laudanum.

MARTHA: Did I do well? Have you told Alice about her night, Benjamin?

ALICE: He said it was another disturbed one.

BENJAMIN: *(To MARTHA.)* Only that.

MARTHA: We had to stop you from leaving the house.

ALICE: What!

MARTHA: Heaven knows where you were thinking of going. You were turning the door handle for what seemed like an eternity. If the door hadn't been locked you'd have been out and away, somewhere into the night. You then about-turned, came back in, crossed to the fire place here and stared into the dying embers. You mumbled something that sounded like prayers. We couldn't be certain, could we, Benjamin?

BENJAMIN: No.

MARTHA: But your voice was plaintiff, tears were rolling down your cheeks. Such anguish.

ALICE: Then I returned to my bed?

MARTHA: Alas, no.

ALICE: What... what did I do then?

MARTHA: You slowly turned and looked up to the door there with – what I can only describe as – a look of sheer terror on your face, as if you'd seen... a ghost. I don't know about Benjamin, but I can tell you that it sent quite a chill up my spine and made my skin tingle as if what you were seeing I were seeing too. It was a good half minute before you ascended the stairs and returned to your room and to your bed. (*Pieces of vase.*) Not before pushing this off the shelf and onto the floor.

ALICE: Oh!

MARTHA: We were, surprised – to say the least – the noise of it breaking didn't wake you, weren't we, Benjamin?

BENJAMIN: It proves how sound asleep you were.

ALICE: It was a gift from my dear Aunt Harriet. And you witnessed all this too, Benjamin, did you?

BENJAMIN: I did.

ALICE: Why don't I remember anything of...? Perhaps we should call... call Doctor Mulford.

MARTHA: I don't think it's too serious to trouble Doctor Mulford with, Alice... in my opinion. But of course I must leave that decision entirely to yourself and your husband.

ALICE: But there's obviously something... something that's not... not...

ALICE starts to breathe quickly.

BENJAMIN: Alice?

ALICE: Oh, I'm... I...

BENJAMIN: Alice?

ALICE convulses and lets out a cry.

Alice? What's the matter?

ALICE: (*To BENJAMIN.*) No!

BENJAMIN: What?

ALICE: Don't look at me like that! Please... please...

BENJAMIN: Like what? Alice?

ALICE: Not like...! Not so...!

BENJAMIN: Alice?

ALICE: I see him! I see him there!

BENJAMIN: Who?

ALICE: Stay away from me! Stay... away!

BENJAMIN: Calm yourself, Alice. There's no-one... Who is it you see?

ALICE: The horns!

BENJAMIN: What!

ALICE: Oh, the stench of sulphur! Don't let him come for me. No! No! No!

BENJAMIN: Alice! *(To MARTHA.)* What was in that drink?

MARTHA: A little hallucinogenic, that's all.

BENJAMIN: It's addling her wits!

MARTHA: *(Frustrated with BENJAMIN.)* Yes, it is!

ALICE: Away, fiend! Away! Jesus Christ our holy redeemer send him back below. Oh!

BENJAMIN: Alice!

ALICE: Away from me! Away!

ALICE hurries up the stairs.

BENJAMIN: Alice! Alice!

ALICE exits through the mezzanine door.

(To MARTHA.) What did you give her?

MARTHA: Only what was necessary.

BENJAMIN: She'll harm herself!

MARTHA: Then take away all means for her to do so and lock her in her

room. Tie her to the bed if necessary. She'll calm eventually. Perhaps, instead, you'd like me to pack my things and go?

BENJAMIN: No.

MARTHA: If you can't see this through what future can there be for *us*?

There is a cry from ALICE off.

Do what's needed. Be firm... my love, be firm. Yes?

BENJAMIN: Yes.

MARTHA: Good. You know where I'll be waiting.

MARTHA puts the empty glass and broken vase on the tray and exits through the SR door. BENJAMIN looks towards the mezzanine door. ALICE's crying is still heard off, but more subdued, like sobbing. BENJAMIN ascends the stairs. He coughs and sits on the stairs to catch his breath. He takes out a handkerchief.

Blackout.

Scene 7

*Present day. Saturday 3.45 p.m./1866. Sunday
12.15 p.m.*

OLLIE lies on the chaise-longue. TRISHA stands beside her. BENJAMIN still sits on the stairs with handkerchief to his mouth. The sobbing is still faintly heard from behind the mezzanine door. OLLIE sits up in a state of agitation, although still in a trance. She looks about the room sensing something... or someone. She looks towards where BENJAMIN is sitting. She stands and slowly moves towards him. She ascends the stairs a few steps and stops in front of him. Although they do not see each other, they are aware of a presence before them. BENJAMIN shivers. He hurries up the stairs and exits through the mezzanine door.

TRISHA: Ollie?

OLLIE surfaces from her trance and stares at TRISHA.

OLLIE: I wasn't her... was I? I was *him*... Benjamin. I was Benjamin Stokes, Alice's husband. (*Disoriented.*) I... I just need to get some... some...

OLLIE exits through the SR door. TRISHA crosses to the SR door and closes it. She scans the room and the air above her. She senses the presence of JACOB.

TRISHA: It's time. Jacob it's time.

TRISHA's breathing intensifies again as she feels the presence of JACOB moving in on her.

Release, Jacob. It's time to release! Let... Let...

TRISHA struggles in the grip of the entity.

(Crying out.) Release!

The entity seems to leave her. TRISHA fights for breath. The mezzanine door opens. EMILY stands in the doorway still wearing the Victorian nightdress.

EMILY: I can't! I can't do it!

Blackout.