

PSYCHIC CONNECTIONS

by

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Characters:

Cast of 6 (2M 4F)

TRISHA WATKINS
EMILY REEVES/ALICE STOKES
OLLIE REEVES
CRAIG PHILLIPS
MARTHA JENNINGS
BENJAMIN STOKES

Synopsis of scenes:

Act 1

Scene 1 – Present day. Earlier in the year. Friday 6.15 p.m.
Scene 2 – Present day. Saturday 2.15 p.m.
Scene 3 – Present day. Saturday 3.00 p.m.
Scene 4 – OLLIE's regression/1886. Saturday 3.15 p.m.
Scene 5 – Present day. Saturday 3.30 p.m.
Scene 6 – OLLIE's regression/1886. Sunday Midday. Two weeks later.
Scene 7 – Present day. Saturday 3.45 p.m./1886. Sunday 12.15 p.m.

Act 2

Scene 1 – Action continues from Act 1.
Scene 2 – CRAIG's regression/1886. Saturday 4.15 p.m.
Scene 3 – Present day. Saturday 4.10 p.m./1886. Saturday 4.30 p.m.
Scene 4 – CRAIG's regression/1886. Saturday 10.30 p.m.
Scene 5 – Present day. Saturday 4.25 p.m.
Scene 6 – OLLIE and CRAIG's regression/1887. Saturday 10.30 p.m.
Scene 7 – OLLIE and CRAIG's regression/1887. Some months later. Evening.
Scene 8 – OLLIE and CRAIG's regression/1888. Evening.
Scene 9 – OLLIE and CRAIG's regression/1889. Evening.
Scene 10 – OLLIE and CRAIG's regression/1889. Some weeks later. Evening.
Scene 11 – Present day. Saturday 5.00 p.m.

Place – A room in The Old School House, Cranleigh, Surrey.

Time – Present day and various times in the eighteen-eighties.

Original music composed by Roland Bryce. Tracks available on request.

Act 1

Scene 1

Present day. Earlier in the year. Friday 6.15 p.m.

The room in The Old School House is spacious and hasn't been altered since its Victorian heyday. The room is illuminated by daylight coming through windows on the unseen walls. Somewhere is a carved school motto that reads 'Omnia Bona Bonis' and a date below that reads A.D. 1881. There is a large fireplace recess on the SL wall with a solitary old fire poker nearby. The room is without furniture. However a dust sheet covers a period chaise-longue, two period wooden chairs and a period side table. These items have been gathered together at the SR wall. There is a door on the SR wall which leads to a corridor and the front door off. Another door is on the US wall. This leads to a room and to other rooms in the house off. It also links the corridor off. A stairway climbs up the US wall leading to a mezzanine door. All doors are closed. Any noises off, such as the front door, echo in the hallway.

Lights up. TRISHA stands in the room. She is wearing contemporary clothing. She is slowly and deliberately scanning the air above her.

TRISHA: *(Gently addressing the air above.)* Alice, are you here? Alice, can you hear me?

There is the faint sound of a woman sobbing. It seems to be coming from behind the mezzanine door.

Alice?

TRISHA ascends the stairs. At the top she reaches out and places her palm to the mezzanine door. Her body reacts as she registers anguish.

(With deep empathy.) Oh, Alice!

The sobbing stops. A sudden knocking is heard, like the sound of a cane rapping on the floor above. TRISHA looks up. She takes a sharp intake of breath. Blackout.

Scene 2

Present day. Saturday 2.15 p.m.

Lights up. There is the sound of the front door off.

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

The SR door opens. CRAIG enters.

Hello? Anyone here?

He crosses to the US door and opens it.

(Calling off.) Hello?

He closes the US door. He takes out his mobile and checks it. He feels a chill and crosses to the SR door and closes it. He takes out a hip flask and has a swig. (During this scene he'll take the occasional drink when appropriate.) He takes one of the chairs and places it in the room. He sits 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 the woman sobbing is heard again from behind the mezzanine door. This time it's brief and soon stops.

(Calling up.) Hello? Anyone there?

CRAIG ascends the stairs. He reaches the mezzanine door. Sound of the front door off.

(To mezzanine door.) Hello?

He tries the handle. The door is locked. CRAIG knocks on the mezzanine door.

Hello?

He tries the handle once more. There is a brief knock on the SR door. OLLIE enters SR.

OLLIE: Hi.

CRAIG: Hi.

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

CRAIG: No, I'm Craig. Craig Phillips.

OLLIE: *(Recognising him.)* Craig...!

CRAIG: Well, well, look who it is: Olivia Reeves.

OLLIE: What are... what are you doing here?

CRAIG: I could ask you the same question. Well, well, well, long time no see, Olivia.

OLLIE: You're not...?

CRAIG: Not what?

OLLIE: Is she around?

CRAIG: Haven't seen her. I think I heard her though.

OLLIE: Where?

CRAIG: *(Mezzanine door.)* Behind that door.

OLLIE: Did you check?

CRAIG: Yes, I checked.

OLLIE: May I?

CRAIG: By all means.

CRAIG steps off the stairs as OLLIE ascends.

I said I checked. It's locked.

OLLIE: *(At mezzanine door.)* Hello?

OLLIE knocks and then tries the handle. She knocks again.

Hello? Trisha Watkins? *(US door.)* What's through there?

CRAIG: A room. There's no-one in it, I checked... but feel free to look if you don't believe me.

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. It's just I thought I was going to be doing this alone. Well... see you

soon... hopefully.

OLLIE hangs up.

CRAIG: So... what a surprise meeting you in a classy joint like this. How are you?

OLLIE: No, you're just part of the crew – one of the technicians.

CRAIG: Technician!

OLLIE: Or something. If you are I'd like you to go. I'm sure someone else can fill in for you.

CRAIG: Good, I'm very well too, thank you.

OLLIE: I'm sorry, but I'm not doing this with you around.

CRAIG: Bye bye then. Close the door on your way out, there's a bit of a draught coming through.

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. Capital T. Kiss. *(To OLLIE.)* Snap? Well, ought to do what she says. Come here often? I've booked a room with a sea view, how about you?

OLLIE: What did she tell you – when she contacted you... about this?

CRAIG: Probably the same as what she told you, that I had a 'connection' to the place – in another life that is. You?

OLLIE: Did she say... who?

CRAIG: To tell you the truth I wasn't paying that much attention. My ears pricked up though when she mentioned the money. Five g for being 'regressed' for a couple of hours – what's there not to like, eh? Is that what she's paying you? Your hair's different. I like it – I think. Kept your figure too – from what I can see. Well done. Doesn't get any easier... I find. Married? Kids? Both, neither?

OLLIE: I'm not here to talk about me.

CRAIG: No, I don't think much of this hotel furniture and the décor's a bit drab. *(Reading inscription.)* Omnia Bona Bonis. Sounds rude. Any guesses? Mind if I close this? Like I say there's a bit

of a draught.

CRAIG closes the SR door.

- OLLIE: What did you hear?
- CRAIG: Excuse me?
- OLLIE: You said you thought you heard someone – behind that door. What did you hear?
- CRAIG: Sounded like someone crying.
- OLLIE: A woman?
- CRAIG: Yes.
- OLLIE: Just that?
- CRAIG: Yes.
- OLLIE: It was probably her.
- CRAIG: Trisha Watkins? She's stuck in traffic, remember.
- OLLIE: No, Alice Stokes – the woman who lived and died here.
- CRAIG: A ghost?
- OLLIE: It's what's been heard here: crying, the sound of a woman sobbing.
- CRAIG: *(Sceptically.)* Really.
- OLLIE: You heard it, didn't you?
- CRAIG: Could've been a pigeon, cooing.
- OLLIE: Crying you said.
- CRAIG: Techie then – setting up, somewhere.
- OLLIE: Crying?
- CRAIG: Just split up with her boyfriend – or girlfriend.
- OLLIE: It's what people have heard.
- CRAIG: If you say so.

OLLIE: They've seen her too – apparently – the ghost of her, dressed in her nightdress and bleeding from her gunshot wound.

CRAIG: Who's seen that?

OLLIE: People who've stayed here.

CRAIG: In this five star hotel?

OLLIE: People who've taken shelter here.

CRAIG: Tramps, you mean.

OLLIE: Travellers.

CRAIG: Tramps.

OLLIE: Just because they might've been homeless it doesn't invalidate what they saw, does it – or heard?

CRAIG: After a couple of bottles of meths people can see and hear anything.

OLLIE: Benjamin Stokes then.

CRAIG: Who?

OLLIE: Alice's husband. It was in his diary towards the end. He heard and saw her.

CRAIG: He might've been making shit up. People do.

OLLIE: Not everyone's a compulsive liar like you.

CRAIG: Come on, Olivia, let's bury the hatchet, shall we? It's been what... fifteen years?

OLLIE: There's only one place where I'd like to bury any hatchet and that's somewhere you wouldn't appreciate.

CRAIG: Ouch! Okay, I hold up my hand, I was a red-bloodied, oversexed, horny, young man – my bad.

OLLIE: Who lied and cheated and screwed everything that moved behind my back.

CRAIG: Not everything.

OLLIE: Including a very good friend of mine – two in fact.

CRAIG: Well, they obviously weren't that good, were they. I did you a favour by calling them out.

OLLIE: What the hell did I ever see in you?

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

OLLIE: I feel sick now just thinking about it.

CRAIG: You weren't exactly a saint yourself remember, Toots, stealing me from little sis and then kicking her out into the big wide world to fend for herself, knowing how vulnerable she was. You been in touch... since? No?

OLLIE: Yes, we have.

CRAIG: When?

OLLIE: A while back.

CRAIG: Weeks... months?

OLLIE: Years. About five.

CRAIG: Really?

OLLIE: Yes.

CRAIG: How was she?

OLLIE: What do you care?

CRAIG: You've kissed and made up then?

There is the brief and distant sound of a school bell ringing off. CRAIG crosses to the SR door and opens it.

(Calling off.) Hello? *(To OLLIE.)* Maybe it's Alice, ringing the school bell, calling the kids back to class. She must be wondering where everybody is. *(Calling off.)* Alice, we're in here. *(To OLLIE.)* Has that been heard too – a bell ringing? No? Look at you. Woooooo! Better go and have a look, see if I can spot anyone... or anything – unless you don't want me to leave you alone here.

OLLIE: Don't worry, there's nothing I'd like more than that.

CRAIG: I'll keep this door closed. Don't want to lose the cosy atmosphere we've built up in here, do we? If I'm not back in five you know they've got me.

CRAIG exits through the SR door, closing it behind him.

OLLIE: (To herself.) God!

OLLIE checks her mobile. The faint sound of the woman sobbing is heard again from behind the mezzanine door. OLLIE nervously stares up at the door. She crosses to the bottom of the stairs. The sobbing stops. OLLIE tentatively ascends the stairs. She stops half way.

(Calling up.) Alice?

She is about to continue when a scratching sound is heard on the US door.

(Calling to US door.) Hello?

OLLIE slowly descends the stairs and moves towards the US door.

(To US door.) Hello? Hello?

She reaches out to open the door. The door suddenly opens. CRAIG puts his head round.

CRAIG: Boo!

OLLIE: Oh! You... fucker!

CRAIG: Sorry, had to do it.

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

No ghosties around – none that I could see anyway. Hey, you don't think we've got the wrong place, do you? 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 Trisha Watkins wondering where the hell we are. Although if she's psychic – like she claims she is – she should know where to find us. (Inhaler.) Still on that thing?

OLLIE ascends the stairs.

OLLIE: I heard her – the crying – from behind the door. Believe me that was no pigeon.

CRAIG: Techie then.

OLLIE: It sounded so... sad, so... pitiful.

CRAIG: Well, it's got to be tough being a ghostie in this place. If I were one you wouldn't catch me dead in a place like this. Get it – wouldn't catch me dead...? No? So is that what she's told you – Ms Watkins?

OLLIE: What?

CRAIG: That you were her – in another life – Alice.

OLLIE: No.

CRAIG: But you *think* you were.

OLLIE: Do I?

CRAIG: Don't you? Maybe I was him – what's his name... Benjamin?

OLLIE: No.

CRAIG: Why not?

OLLIE: Because Benjamin Stokes was the headmaster of the school here.

CRAIG: And your point being?

OLLIE: He was someone who was dedicated to the pursuit of education.

CRAIG: Meaning?

OLLIE: To the good all things are good.

CRAIG: What?

OLLIE: Omnia Bona Bonis.

CRAIG: Okay, so in this life I don't speak Latin.

OLLIE: Or any life I should imagine.

CRAIG: Well I must be connected to the place here, mustn't I? At least Ms Watkins thinks I must be – I wouldn't be here otherwise. Okay, who do you think I was then – if I wasn't him?

OLLIE: No idea.

CRAIG: Who else was around then? Like I say I wasn't really paying attention. I'm sure you were. Go on, have a guess – an educated one.

OLLIE: Grounds-man... janitor... 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? Maybe she thinks the P.E. teacher was somehow responsible for Alice's death. Perhaps by constantly bouncing a basketball on the ceiling beneath her bedroom floor, forcing her to pick up a gun and shoot herself – that's how she died, wasn't it? (*Mimes bouncing basketball on the ceiling.*) Boof, boof, boof!... Boof, boof, boof!... Boof, boof –

OLLIE: Okay, enough!

*The faint and brief sound of a man and woman arguing is heard. It seems to be coming from the fireplace, down the chimney. The words are indecipherable. It fades.
CRAIG crosses to the fireplace.*

CRAIG: (*Calling up chimney.*) Hello? Any ghosties up there? (*To OLLIE.*) Techies again. (*Calling up chimney.*) Hey, techies, keep the noise down, will you, you'll wake the dead. (*To OLLIE.*) Or maybe that was in Benny's diary too – voices coming through the fireplace? No? Definitely a star knocked off Trip Advisor for that – unless you're here for the spooks, then they get one added on. Look at you, Toots.

OLLIE: Don't call me that please.

CRAIG: What, Toots?

OLLIE: I didn't like it back then and I like it even less now.

CRAIG: It's a sign of affection.

OLLIE: Not to me it isn't.

CRAIG: Is to me. You obviously believe in them then – ghosties.

OLLIE: Yes, I do.

CRAIG: Ever seen one?

OLLIE: Not personally. I know people who have.

CRAIG: Doesn't count. We all know people who have. 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've always felt a thing for Romans – Roman times that is – Centurions, gladiators – all that. Maybe just stuff that got lodged in here from school. What about you? Who do you think you could've been – when you weren't being Alice, that is. Cleopatra? She's a popular one. Every woman likes to think they were her, don't they? Maybe it's the thought of having all those young, naked Egyptian slaves looking after you in the bath. It's a wonder she ever got out. Asses milk wasn't it?

OLLIE: Please, I just want to not... talk, thanks. We've got nothing to say to each other, so it's probably best we don't try.

CRAIG: Okay... as you wish.

OLLIE takes the other chair and places it away from CRAIG. She sits. CRAIG checks his mobile. He starts to play his game again. Gunshot noises are heard. OLLIE tries to ignore this, but it eventually gets to her.

OLLIE: For God's sake!

OLLIE crosses to the SR door.

CRAIG: Going somewhere?

OLLIE: Yes.

CRAIG: You're not gonna leave me alone with the ghosties, are you?

OLLIE is about to exit SR.

It's not what she told me, you know.

OLLIE: What?

CRAIG: Your baby sis... when I saw her.

OLLIE: You saw her? When?

CRAIG: Sorry, I forgot we've got nothing to say to each other.

OLLIE: When?

CRAIG: *Less than five years ago... a lot less. Could you shut the door, there's a bit of a draught.*

OLLIE: You're lying.

CRAIG: No, it's freezing.

OLLIE: Where did you see her?

CRAIG: Door... please.

OLLIE closes the SR door.

OLLIE: Where?

CRAIG: Clapham. Bumped into her out of the blue. We decided to go for a drink together – for old times' sake. She said you hadn't been in contact at all. One of you must be lying. Which one of you is telling porkies?

OLLIE: How was she?

CRAIG: Quite pleased to see me, I'd say.

OLLIE: No, in herself I mean?

CRAIG: Not in a great way – if truth be told. She perked up a bit after a drink or two.

OLLIE: Where's she living?

CRAIG: Don't you know that? It must be you then – telling porkies.

OLLIE: Where?

CRAIG: Here and there, it seems.

OLLIE: Is she with anyone?

Sound of the front door off.

CRAIG: What do we reckon, more ghosties or Trisha Watkins?

CRAIG crosses to the SR door and opens it. He looks out.

(Calling off.) Hello? Anyone there? *(To OLLIE.)* No, must be more ghosties.

CRAIG closes the SR door.

Better make sure they're not trying to creep up on us. *(Mezzanine door.)* We know that door's locked – although that shouldn't really bother a ghost. *(US door.)* What do you

reckon – Alice is standing right here behind this door, covered in blood, school bell in hand.

CRAIG opens the US door. TRISHA stands in the doorway wearing a Victorian period costume.

Jesus!

- TRISHA: *(Entering.)* No, Trisha Watkins. Sorry, didn't mean to startle you both. Apologies for keeping you waiting. *(Greeting.)* Ollie. Mmm, what's that I'm getting, jasmine, is it? Craig. I'm getting... whisky, is it? Well, what do you think, suitably atmospheric.
- OLLIE: I just thought it was just going to be me doing this – alone.
- CRAIG: Me too.
- TRISHA: I'm sorry I didn't tell you, I didn't want to take the risk that one or both of you wouldn't want to come knowing your past connection – in this life I mean... and perhaps in a past one too.
- OLLIE: How did you know we were...?
- CRAIG: Lovers.
- OLLIE: Together – once.
- TRISHA: My guides 'told' me – in a manner of speaking. Just like they 'told' me you were both connected to the place here and directed me to you.
- CRAIG: Where's your crew?
- TRISHA: Been and gone – earlier today.
- CRAIG: What?
- TRISHA: I don't like anyone around except the people directly involved, energetically it influences the process. The cameras are being operated remotely. *(Scanning the room.)* It's amazing how well they manage to conceal them, you wouldn't know they're there.
- CRAIG: There's cameras hidden in the room?
- 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: We heard her – Alice – her crying, behind that door up there.
- CRAIG: Techies right?
- OLLIE: You heard what she said, the crew have been and gone.
- CRAIG: Someone finishing off – crying ‘cos they missed their lift.
- TRISHA: Ollie’s right, Craig, no-one remained.
- CRAIG: As far as you know.
- OLLIE: And voices – like a man and a woman arguing – coming through the fireplace there. What’s upstairs?
- TRISHA: It *was* the master bedroom.
- CRAIG: Maybe it’s our couple of tramps squabbling over the duvet.
- OLLIE: Why don’t you go and have a look?
- CRAIG: It’s locked, remember?
- TRISHA: And we’ve also 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: (*Pointed at CRAIG.*) Wouldn’t we? Benjamin and Alice?
- TRISHA: Benjamin and Martha, my guess, engaged in one of their heated altercations.
- OLLIE: We heard a bell ringing too, like a school bell.
- TRISHA: Yes, we heard that too – when we were here with the Haunted Abodes team in the spring.
- OLLIE: Yes, that’s right, I remember that. But you didn’t hear anything else.
- TRISHA: They didn’t – the rest of the team, I mean.
- OLLIE: You did?
- TRISHA: I stayed on, after we’d packed up. I knew I had to be alone here – undisturbed... so to speak. It turned out to be anything but un-disturbing.

OLLIE: Did you see... Alice?

TRISHA: Yes.

OLLIE: Was she like how people have described her – in her nightdress, bleeding from her wound?

TRISHA: Yes.

OLLIE: Did you... speak to her?

TRISHA: I tried.

OLLIE: She didn't hear you?

TRISHA: She's unreachable, lost in her sadness. I understood that night what I needed to do here – what *we* needed to do.

CRAIG: Speaking of which, how long do you think this is gonna take? It's just I have something I could fit in later if...

TRISHA: Like I've said, Craig, I won't keep you beyond six. We'll 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: What kind of costumes?

TRISHA: The kind of thing they wore in the eighteen-eighties 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.

OLLIE: We have separate changing rooms, yes?

TRISHA: Yes, out there, Ollie, yours is the first door on the left. Costume in the room.

OLLIE exits through the SR door.

CRAIG: And you're definitely not gonna make me do anything stupid, right – like those hypnotist shows that get you to... make love to a chair while whistling the national anthem – or something.

TRISHA: I'd like to assure you again, Craig, it's not one of those shows.

CRAIG: But you're still gonna dress me up like a plonker.

TRISHA: Handsome and dashing.

CRAIG: In the eighteenth century perhaps.

TRISHA: Nineteenth.

CRAIG: Whatever.

TRISHA: Over eighty percent of my viewers are women, Craig, they'll be swooning over you, a regular Mr Darcy.

CRAIG: *(Unconvinced.)* Right.

TRISHA: *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. *(Coughs.)*

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

CRAIG: I won't touch it, promise.

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

CRAIG gives the flask to TRISHA.

Thank you. And could you close the door after you, please?

CRAIG exits through the SR door, closing it behind him. TRISHA surveys the room and the air above. She throws CRAIG's hip flask into her bag. She then takes out her mobile and dials.

(To mobile.) Hi. Okay?... Yes, they are... Yes... I know. Just try not to move around too much... I will... Yes, I will... Hello?... Can you hear me?... Hello?... Yes, I'm here... There's obviously some... Just sit tight... Talk to you soon... I will... Yes... Hello?

TRISHA hangs up. She surveys the room and the air above again. She glances up towards the mezzanine door. She crosses to the fireplace and puts her hand to

the wall. Her body reacts as she senses the anguish. The knocking noise is heard once more on the floor above. TRISHA looks up. She addresses the air above.

It's time now. It's time.

The knocking intensifies.

(Firmly.) It's time!

Blackout.

Scene 3

Present day. Saturday 3.00 p.m.

Lights up. OLLIE enters SR. She is wearing a Victorian period outfit. She looks about the room and then up to the mezzanine door. She tentatively starts to ascend the stairs. CRAIG appears at the SR door. He is also wearing a Victorian period outfit.

CRAIG: *(Feigning shock.)* My God!

OLLIE jumps in surprise.

Phew, it's you, I thought it was Alice. *(Giving wolf whistle.)* Sexy! These trousers. No wonder they had issues with sex in those days having to wear these. Looks too like you might have problems fitting in a quickie in that gear. Any word from Alice? Or our friends up the chimney?

CRAIG checks the walls for cameras (forth wall).

I must say they've hidden them well. *(Addressing possible camera.)* Hey you losers, turn over, Top Gear's on the other side. That'll be cut for sure.

OLLIE: Where is she?

CRAIG: What do you care?

OLLIE: She's my sister.

CRAIG: A sister is what a sister does... did.

OLLIE: Where?

CRAIG: Like I said, here and there. Don't know for sure.

- OLLIE: Is she with anyone?
- CRAIG: You know we're being filmed. (*Addressing possible camera.*) Hey, now you're missing Coronation Street. (*Trousers.*) Ouch! Shouldn't make sudden moves in these.
- OLLIE: Did she say anything about... about me?
- CRAIG: She did, but I'm not sure you'd want me to repeat it – especially in front of the cameras. I don't think the P.E. teacher would be wearing this gear – not even back in those days. Not good for circuit training. No, I'm pretty sure Ms Watkins thinks I was him – Benny, the headmaster... dear wifey. I may not be Mr Academic in this life, but if he was anything like Craig Phillips in *his* life he'd have kept a tight ship. No messing around with Mr Stokes or it'll be pants down and six of the best – girls too – no preferential treatment, not in my school.
- OLLIE: I'm sure you'd enjoy that.
- CRAIG: I wouldn't. It'd be for their own good. My old man kept me squarely in line with his slipper – and other things that were close to hand.
- OLLIE: And that was a big success.
- CRAIG: Didn't mess around with *him*, that's for sure. Teachers today are stripped of all power, no authority. Might as well stick a sign on their backs saying 'kick me please, I can do sod all about it and feel free to get me sacked if I try'.
- OLLIE: Is she with anyone? Craig?
- CRAIG: Craig now.
- TRISHA enters through the US door.*
- TRISHA: Well, look at you two. They fit okay?
- CRAIG: (*Trousers.*) I would've gone for a couple of sizes up on these – especially around here.
- OLLIE: I don't know how women could wear this.
- TRISHA: That's actually quite loose. The rule was in those days: if you could breathe it wasn't tight enough.
- CRAIG: It obviously applied to bloke's trousers too.
- OLLIE: I wish we were trying to connect instead to medieval times then

all I'd have to wear is a loose tunic or something.

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

OLLIE: I said don't call me that, please!

TRISHA: Craig, perhaps you'd like to give me a hand with something.

CRAIG: What?

TRISHA: I need to position the chaise.

CRAIG: The whose?

TRISHA: Chaise. Like a sofa. Here. Just take that end, will you?

TRISHA and CRAIG pick up the chaise-longue.

CRAIG: Do I get paid extra for this?

TRISHA: I'm afraid not, Craig, a good will gesture if you don't mind. Over there please. Here will do. Okay, a little period furnishing and a comfy place to regress. Ollie, for the moment, let's have you sitting on the chaise and Craig in the chair here.

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

CRAIG: Come on, Florence Nightingale, it might be fun.

TRISHA: Don't worry, I'll regress you both separately, but first I need to introduce you both – together. Sit. So, are we sitting comfortably?

CRAIG: No.

TRISHA: As comfortably as we can? I'll give an intro to the episode – and to 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 cameras.)* So, welcome people to a brand new series hosted by me, Trisha Watkins: psychic, time traveller and truth seeker. Today we are at The Old School House near Cranleigh in Surrey, which over the years has been subject to many reports of paranormal goings on.

CRAIG: Wooooo!

TRISHA: Thank you, Craig. Some of you indeed may remember it from when I visited here with the Haunted Abodes team early in the spring. The team attempted – unsuccessfully then – to contact Alice Stokes, the woman who died here in eighteen eighty-six and whose ghost has been seen: a sad figure, still bleeding from her gunshot 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 sixty-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 eighty-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 happily doused 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 other strange phenomenon. 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: What a shame.

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 the dead are not dead as *I* know it. In my understanding we have all lived before and all 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 cameras.)* 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.
- TRISHA: Craig, please.
- CRAIG: Just trying to lighten the mood.
- TRISHA: Thanks, but if the mood needs lightening that'll be my job.
- CRAIG: You's the boss, lady.
- OLLIE: You can cut these bits, right?
- TRISHA: I can. *(To cameras.)* 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. As you see they have both sportingly joined me by dressing up in period costume of the time.
- CRAIG: I won't be doing too 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 – and indeed now. Does anything about it feel 'familiar' perhaps? Ollie, let's start with you.
- OLLIE: I would say... yes, it did – it does.
- TRISHA: Can you say more?
- CRAIG: She thinks she was Alice Stokes.
- OLLIE: No, I don't.
- CRAIG: She does.

TRISHA: Let Ollie her speak for herself, Craig. Anything more, Ollie?

OLLIE: It... just feels familiar, that's all.

TRISHA: Craig, what about you?

CRAIG: Well... the wallpaper was different, I think, and the furniture was a lot newer then – but seriously, yes it does.

TRISHA: Yes?

CRAIG: No, as soon as I walked in I just got this sense of a... a...

TRISHA: Yes, Craig?

CRAIG: A basketball.

OLLIE: Oh!

TRISHA: Basketball?

CRAIG: An old one – a pig skin one. Might I have had something to do with the gym here – the P.E. teacher perhaps?

OLLIE: He's being facetious.

CRAIG: It's a little joke we're sharing.

OLLIE: We're not.

CRAIG: No, it's obvious I was him.

TRISHA: The P.E. teacher?

CRAIG: No, the headmaster – Benjamin. You obviously do too otherwise you wouldn't have dressed me up in this. Ah, but that would also mean I cheated on you, Toots, and tried to get you banged up in the nut house. Sorry about that, no hard feelings, let's shake and make up. No? (*To TRISHA.*) Am I right?

TRISHA: We'll see, Craig. You've both heard noises since you've been here. Can you describe what you heard – Ollie?

OLLIE: A woman crying it sounded like – coming from behind that door.

CRAIG: A pigeon cooing.

OLLIE: Crying.

- CRAIG: Okay, a pigeon crying.
- OLLIE: The sound of arguing voices – a man and a woman – coming through the fireplace there.
- CRAIG: Techies stuck in the brickwork.
- OLLIE: And a bell ringing from somewhere outside – like a school bell.
- CRAIG: Techie’s ringtone.
- TRISHA: Well hopefully all that would have been caught on camera. Let’s press on, shall we? Okay, Ollie, let’s start with you. We’ll have you lying here on the chaise, head this way so we get the best camera angle on you.
- OLLIE: Is he going to be in the room?
- CRAIG: Who’s he, the dog’s dad?
- 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: Are you sure he has to be here?
- TRISHA: My guides know best. Just try to block him out, Ollie.
- OLLIE: Do you think he could’ve been... *him*, Benjamin Stokes?
- TRISHA: We shall see.
- OLLIE: Can’t your guides just tell you?
- TRISHA: They will only give me what’s necessary – the next and most valuable hint as to how to proceed. Perhaps they don’t want to spoil the surprise for us. They directed me to you both, so you must have a significant connection.

OLLIE: I think I may've been *her*.

TRISHA: Alice?

OLLIE: No, Martha – Martha Jennings.

TRISHA: Oh, what makes you think that?

OLLIE: It's just... knowing about her and... well... and me – the way I've... in this life, the things I've done, things I'm not proud of.

TRISHA: We each have our pasts.

OLLIE: I know, but... I...

TRISHA: Are you thinking of something in particular, Ollie?

OLLIE: When Craig and I were... together, I was cruel to my sister – Emily. I was supposed to look after her after our parents... They died in a car crash when I was nineteen. Emily ran away. I haven't seen her or spoken to her since. Craig says he has – recently. He's probably lying. Do you think you could...? I'd like to see her, if only to say... sorry. Could you...?

TRISHA: That depends on whether she wants to be found. First things first, Ollie. We have business here. So, just lie back.

OLLIE: We can free her, can we – Alice – from this place?

TRISHA: It's my hope. My guides certainly think so.

OLLIE: And them – Benjamin and Martha?

TRISHA: Yes.

OLLIE: Even though they were cruel and sadistic in their lives, in what they did to her?

TRISHA: They've suffered enough here, they all have. (*Looking up to where the knocking was heard.*) It's time to release them.

OLLIE: What happens when it gets demolished – this place – if they're still here?

TRISHA: It's not the house that's trapping them here. But let's not waste time on speculation, especially when we're here together now and have the chance to act. So, again, just lie back and try to relax – the best you can in that. Take some deep breaths.

TRISHA takes her crystal from her bag.

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... eighty-six.

TRISHA: Eighteen eighty-six? Can you describe what you're feeling?

OLLIE groans.

What is it? Are you seeing something? Someone? Who is it you're seeing? Who's there? Who's there?

Blackout. SFX of a dreamlike regression.

Scene 4

OLLIE's regression/1886. Saturday 3.15 p.m.

ALICE lets out a scream. Lights up. ALICE sits up on the chaise-longue. BENJAMIN stands by her. MARTHA 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 from 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 seriously.

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... 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: I can be firm.

MARTHA: Good.

BENJAMIN: *(With passion for MARTHA.)* Oh, Martha –

MARTHA: *(Holding him back.)* First things first. She needs her laudanum. I'll go home and pack my things.

MARTHA exits through the SR door. BENJAMIN looks up to the mezzanine door. Blackout.

Scene 5

Present day. Saturday 3.30 p.m.

Lights up. OLLIE is lying once more on the chaise-longue. TRISHA stands next to her. OLLIE surfaces from her trance and sits up.

OLLIE: What...? Is it finished?

TRISHA: Not yet. You just came out early. It happens.

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 too much away just yet, 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

OLLIE's regression/1886. Sunday midday. Two weeks later.

Lights up. 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 broken 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. 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, (*Broken 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. She wears a dressing gown over her nightdress.

ALICE: Benjamin?

BENJAMIN: Alice.

ALICE: Is it time... to open up?

ALICE starts to descend the stairs. She 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.

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 plaintive, 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 suddenly looked up to the ceiling to the spot where your father used to rap on the floor with his cane to summon you when on his deathbed. You called out 'Father I'm coming' – several times in fact. But, distracted again, you turned once more to look into the dying embers and resume your mumbled prayers. It was a good minute or so before you then ascended the stairs and returned to your room and to your bed – *(pieces of vase)* although, along the way, unfortunately pushing this from the shelf.

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 erratically.

BENJAMIN: Alice?

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

BENJAMIN: Alice?

ALICE convulses and lets out a cry.

Alice? What is it? What's – ?

ALICE: *(To BENJAMIN.)* No!

BENJAMIN: Alice?

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

BENJAMIN: Like what? Alice?

ALICE: Not like...! Not so...! 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*?
Do what's needed. Be firm... my love, be firm. Yes?

BENJAMIN: Yes.

MARTHA: Good. Attend to her and then come to me. I'll be waiting.

MARTHA takes the empty glass and broken vase and exits through the US door. BENJAMIN looks towards the mezzanine door. BENJAMIN ascends the stairs. He coughs and sits on the stairs to catch his breath. He takes out a handkerchief and coughs into it. Blackout.

Scene 7

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

Lights up. OLLIE lies on the chaise-longue. TRISHA stands beside her. BENJAMIN still sits on the stairs with handkerchief to his mouth. The sobbing has stopped. 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. Wasn't I?

TRISHA nods.

(Emotional.) Excuse me, I... I just need to... get some...

OLLIE exits hurriedly through the SR door. TRISHA crosses to the SR door and closes it. She scans the room and the air above. TRISHA puts her crystal back in her bag. Sound of the front door off as OLLIE exits. TRISHA takes out her mobile and checks it. The faint sound of the woman sobbing is heard behind the mezzanine door.

TRISHA: Alice?

She starts to ascend the stairs. The sound of arguing is heard from the fireplace once more, but still the words are indecipherable. This is followed by the knocking on the floor above. TRISHA looks up. All sounds rise in volume.

(Addressing air above.) It's time, now. Time to release.

TRISHA's breathing becomes more rapid and pronounced as she struggles to resist the unseen force.

Release! Jacob! Release!

TRISHA convulses. The mezzanine door opens. EMILY stands in the doorway. She wears a Victorian nightdress. All sounds cut out. TRISHA turns and faces EMILY.

(In a voice not her own.) Alice! Alice my child!

TRISHA reaches out to her. EMILY recoils and lets out a stifled cry. Blackout.

Act 2

Scene 1

Action continues from previous scene.

Lights up. TRISHA sits in a chair. She holds her crystal close to her as she breathes to recover herself. EMILY remains on the stairs.

EMILY: He was... inside you? Your face – his face – it looked so... He thought I was Alice.

TRISHA: You are – to him.

EMILY: I heard her crying. She was here, right here. So cold.

TRISHA: There's a blanket in one of the bags. Are you okay to continue?

EMILY: Are you?

TRISHA: Yes.

There is the sound of the front door off.

Better go. Emily? *(Mobile.)* We'll stay connected.

EMILY exits through the mezzanine door, closing it behind her. There is a knock on the SR door.

Come in.

The SR door opens and CRAIG stands in the doorway.

CRAIG: I saw Olivia hurrying off somewhere. I'm guessing she's done.

TRISHA: Not yet. But since you're here, Craig, perhaps we can make a start on you. If you'd like to assume the position.

CRAIG: What position would that be then?

TRISHA: Lying down on the chaise, please.

CRAIG: So who was she?

TRISHA: I can't say.

CRAIG: Alice?

TRISHA: I can't say. It might influence your own experience.

CRAIG: I won't let it. Whisper it in my ear. I won't tell them out there – if they're still watching, that is.

TRISHA: Just lie down please. Head this way.

CRAIG: How about a nice massage instead?

TRISHA: Please.

CRAIG: No shenanigans remember.

TRISHA: Like I say again, Craig, it's not one of those shows.

CRAIG: Didn't stop you from dressing me up like this.

TRISHA: Also, as I've said, anything you strongly object to we won't use. Think of the money, Craig.

CRAIG: Don't worry, I am.

CRAIG lies on the chaise.

TRISHA: Okay, just try to relax and let your mind go blank.

CRAIG: In these trousers?

TRISHA takes out her crystal.

What are you gonna do with that?

TRISHA: Eyes closed please.

Blackout. SFX of a dreamlike regression.

Scene 2

CRAIG's regression/1886. Saturday 4.15 p.m.

Lights up. The fire is lit. ALICE sits in a chair clutching an opened bible. She wears her nightdress and dressing gown. She appears gaunt and tired and stares into the distance. MARTHA stands by a tea trolley close to the US door as if she's just entered. Tea pot, cups etc. are laid out on the trolley.

MARTHA: Here we are.

ALICE ignores MARTHA and looks down at the bible. MARTHA wheels the trolley to the centre of the room.

Anything you wish to share from the Good Book? Please don't be upset with me, I was just venturing an opinion, Alice, that's all. Who knows what you may be capable of during one of your *episodes*. Far be it from me to meddle in your affairs, but as someone who stands on the outside, a mere onlooker – who not only has yours and your husband's best interests in mind, but also the future welfare of the school here – it would seem prudent to safeguard the funds left by your father by putting them in your husband's charge. Your father may have been insistent during his final days that there be no deviation from his wishes, but I think Benjamin can be trusted, at least by now, to be a worthy guardian of any legacy where the school is concerned. There's no-one in the community here who would question for one instant his loyalty and devotion as a headmaster. I, for one, marvel at the extra hours he dedicates beyond the call of duty. Even now, in his free time, he's visiting the parents of a boy to discuss his faltering progress. Perhaps, too, I'm speaking as a traditionalist when it comes to these things, but if I were married and my father left the same for me, I'd not hesitate to give my husband charge of all – presuming I thought him wise and principled, that is... which Benjamin assuredly is. All I'm saying is, Alice –

ALICE: I want to see Doctor Mulford.

MARTHA: This should be brewed by now.

ALICE: I want to see him today!

MARTHA: Then we'll ask Benjamin to fetch him. Although I'm quite certain what the good doctor will be advising is rest, rest and more rest... and tea.

MARTHA pours a cup of tea for herself. ALICE returns to the bible. MARTHA takes out a phial and tips some of its contents into the tea pot. She considers and then tips in more. She hides the phial, stirs the pot and pours another cup of tea. She offers the cup to ALICE, but ALICE isn't interested. MARTHA replaces the cup on the trolley. She sips her own tea.

Mm, delicious. The brewing of a good cup of tea is one of those things in life that shouldn't be rushed, don't you agree? Walking by the brook the other day, there were so many pretty white flowers –

ALICE: Where's Edna?

MARTHA: Edna had to be... released.

ALICE: Released! For what reason?

MARTHA: For helping herself to the alcoholic supplies in the house – so Benjamin said.

ALICE: Edna?

MARTHA: I know, who'd have thought it?

ALICE: I don't believe that.

MARTHA: Well...

ALICE: Why wasn't I consulted on this?

MARTHA: Presumably Benjamin, in his consideration for you, didn't want to trouble you with anything that might cause –

ALICE: Edna has been in our family's service for as long as I can remember. She's practically been a second mother to me since my own Mother...

MARTHA: I know, but –

ALICE: It's – it's not right just to dismiss her – for whatever reason – and not without... without –

MARTHA: You're getting yourself all worked up, Alice. Drink some tea.

ALICE: I don't want tea! I want Edna back. I want my health back and I want you to leave. I want you to leave.

MARTHA: I see. Well...

ALICE: I'm sure people are talking.

MARTHA: People will always talk, Alice, but that shouldn't –

ALICE: I don't want you here.

MARTHA: Perhaps you should discuss this with Benjamin.

ALICE: He didn't discuss the dismissal of Edna with me, I'm not discussing the dismissal of you with him.

MARTHA: I think, at least –

ALICE: I don't care what you *think*! I don't want you here.

- MARTHA: My intention was only to be of assistance in your time of need – as your husband wished me to be. Very well, I'll pack my things and go. I would still advise however putting your finances into Benjamin's charge. An unstable mind and an inheritance are easily parted.
- ALICE: You'll not get a penny of that money.
- MARTHA: Oh dear, you really have formed a very low opinion of me, Alice, how very disappointing.
- ALICE: Please, just...!
- MARTHA: I'm going. I know when I'm not welcome.
- ALICE: Has anything... occurred?
- MARTHA: Occurred?
- ALICE: Yes, between you and Benjamin?
- MARTHA: If you're insinuating a romantic liaison of some sort?
- ALICE: Well?
- MARTHA: Now you are really imagining things, Alice. You're deeply underestimating what a good, loyal and trustworthy gentleman your husband is. So this is why you want me to go. Let me assure you, Alice, that –
- ALICE: I... I... I just want you to leave!
- MARTHA: I'm sorry my brief sojourn in your house has provoked such suspicions in you.
- ALICE: *(More to herself.)* Brief.
- MARTHA makes her way up the stairs. ALICE drinks some tea. MARTHA sees this.*
- MARTHA: Tell me, Alice, I'm curious, tell me what is it you see when you have your... *turns*. It all seems very biblical. Is it really angels and demons?
- ALICE: That's something only Doctor Mulford and my husband need be concerned with.
- MARTHA: You've seen Beelzebub himself, dressed up in his finery, I believe, on a couple of occasions.

ALICE: Go!

MARTHA: Well let's hope Doctor Mulford won't have to take severe measures with you.

ALICE: What... what do you mean?

MARTHA: The mad house, Alice, the mad house. It would be such a shame to see someone so young and so beautiful having to spend the rest of her days in some terrifying institution whose fellow tenants are howling, jibbering lunatics.

ALICE: Leave me alone! Leave me! Go!

ALICE is starting to become disoriented.

Please, no, not again. Not again.

ALICE starts to convulse. She stares wildly about her.

MARTHA: What is it? What is it you're seeing?

ALICE: Oh, dear Lord! Oh, stay away from me!

MARTHA: Is it him? Yes? Is he like how our Reverend Hopkins describes him in his fiery sermons? Tell me he is. Cloven-hooved and goat-eyed.

ALICE: Please, no! Away! Away!

ALICE holds the bible out as protection. She shuffles into a corner to hide.

No, no, no! What do you want from me? What do you want?

MARTHA: Alice?

ALICE turns on MARTHA.

ALICE: *(To MARTHA.)* Get away from me, fiend! Away!

MARTHA: Come on, Alice, I'm no fiend.

ALICE: Away!

ALICE starts to tear at her nightdress.

MARTHA: Let's get you to your room now before you do yourself an injury.

ALICE: Away, devil!

MARTHA seizes ALICE's hands. ALICE frantically tries to pull away.

Let me go! Let me go!

MARTHA: Don't fight me. Alice! Come along now.

ALICE cries out and breaks free of MARTHA's grip. Still holding the bible, she hurries to the SR door and exits wailing.

Alice!

MARTHA is about to exit after her, but something prompts her to stop. She turns and stares into the space behind her. Blackout.

Scene 3

Present day. Saturday 4.10 p.m./1886 Saturday 4.30 p.m.

Lights up. CRAIG is standing and looking in MARTHA's direction, who in turn is staring in CRAIG's. He is still in a trance. TRISHA watches from beside the chaise-longue. Although MARTHA and CRAIG do not see each other, they are aware of a presence before them. MARTHA hurriedly clears up the tea items and exits through the US door.

TRISHA: Craig?

CRAIG surfaces from his trance.

CRAIG: What... what's going on?

TRISHA: You went for a little walkabout, Craig. It happens.

CRAIG: You were putting... putting all that... into my head.

TRISHA: No, Craig, it's what you're remembering.

CRAIG: Hypno tricks.

TRISHA: Past memories.

CRAIG: Am I done?

TRISHA: Not yet. Like Ollie, you came out too soon. Let's take five. Go outside and clear your head a bit.

CRAIG: Can I have my flask, please?

TRISHA: That's not clearing your head, Craig. Just until we're finished here. Back in five.

CRAIG exits through the SR door. TRISHA closes the door behind him. She surveys the air above. Sound of the front door off as CRAIG exits. The mezzanine door opens. EMILY stands in the doorway.

EMILY: He's gone?

TRISHA: He'll be back shortly... hopefully they both will. You okay? You need that blanket.

EMILY: She was in the room – Alice – I saw her. She stared at me. I wasn't scared, even though her face was all... messed up. She looks like me – especially wearing this. I wanted to hug her. Crazy, wanting to hug a ghost.

TRISHA: Not really. Just difficult. Did she speak?

EMILY: No.

TRISHA: Did you speak to her?

EMILY: She didn't stay long. She looked so... sad. Do they know who they are yet... were?

TRISHA: Your sister does. He's getting there... slowly.

EMILY: Perhaps Alice doesn't want them to be free – Benjamin and Martha. Perhaps she wants them to rot in this place forever – like her father does... if ghosts can rot that is. It would serve them right for what they did.

TRISHA: But Alice wouldn't be free, she'd be stuck here until –

EMILY: We're all stuck somewhere aren't we, might as well be here. I've been stuck in worse places than this.

TRISHA: Em –

EMILY: At least it has a roof. More than I can say for some places I've been stuck in.

TRISHA: For now. I trust my guides.

EMILY: Your guides! It's easy for them to say. Just kiss and make up like nothing ever happened. What do they know? What do they know about what she went through?

TRISHA: Em...?

EMILY: I'm sorry, I know you've been really good to me, looking after me and everything. We just shouldn't assume it's what she wants.

TRISHA: Perhaps if you see her again you could ask her. And we'll do what she wants. Look, you're freezing. I'll get you that blanket.

TRISHA starts to ascend the stairs.

EMILY: No. I'm okay.

TRISHA: I'll...

EMILY nods. TRISHA exits through the SR door, closing it behind her. EMILY takes a small bag from behind the mezzanine door. She takes out a duelling pistol of the Victorian period. She descends a couple of steps, raises the pistol slowly and points it down into the room. She holds it for a moment before turning and exiting through the mezzanine door, closing it behind her. Blackout. SFX of a dreamlike regression.

Scene 4

CRAIG's regression/1866. Saturday 10.30 p.m.

Lights up. Sound of thunder and rain outside. There is the occasional flash of lightening. The fire is lit. MARTHA is examining items which she takes from a storage box.

MARTHA: *(Item.)* Tasteful. *(Taking out another item.)* What do we think, his or hers? It's amazing what her father squirreled away, isn't it? *(Item.)* Now I could see you in this.

BENJAMIN: Perhaps I should call on him tonight.

MARTHA: What, go to the graveyard and dig him up?

BENJAMIN: Not her father, I mean Doctor –

MARTHA: I know who you mean. Tonight, tomorrow, it'll make no difference.

BENJAMIN: But –

MARTHA: I'm not letting you go out in this! You'll catch your death, especially with your chest.

MARTHA takes out a case that contains a pair of duelling pistols with accoutrements.

Now look here! You didn't tell me he had these! What craftsmanship! I wonder what it would be like to fight a duel. One must have nerves of steel I should imagine, to be staring death in the face and hold one's own arm steady.

BENJAMIN: Don't point that thing at me please!

MARTHA: It's not loaded... yet.

BENJAMIN crosses to the stairs.

You've checked on her enough. Let her sleep.

BENJAMIN: It was by far the worst episode she's had.

MARTHA: It had to be, don't you see! Don't you *see*, Benjamin!

BENJAMIN: Yes, but –

MARTHA: Things were dragging on, we had to be more decisive – *I* had to be more decisive – else we'd be in our dotage by the time we –

BENJAMIN: I just... don't want her to suffer.

MARTHA: She's upstairs in bed, sleeping, that's not suffering!

BENJAMIN: She was in the garden screaming hysterically, tearing her clothes from her body.

MARTHA: Which is what I'll be doing if you don't behave like a man!

BENJAMIN: I... I find it offensive, Martha, that you... that you keep insinuating –

MARTHA: Oh, please, don't get so worked up, you'll do yourself an injury.

BENJAMIN starts to cough violently.

See, now look what you've done.

BENJAMIN takes out a medicine bottle and has a swig.

(Taking out another item.) What about this?

BENJAMIN: I mean it, Martha, you're constantly undermining me with your –

MARTHA: Will you please sit down! You're making me jittery with all your fussing about.

BENJAMIN: Martha – !

MARTHA points the pistol at BENJAMIN again.

I said don't point that thing at me!

There is the sound of a large thunderclap. BENJAMIN flinches.

MARTHA: Oh you frightened little mouse!

The mezzanine door opens. ALICE stands in the doorway wearing a nightgown. She has a vacant expression on her face.

BENJAMIN: Alice? Alice, what are you doing up? Alice can you hear me?

BENJAMIN ascends the stairs. ALICE hisses at him and raises a claw.

Alice? It's me, Benjamin.

BENJAMIN backs down the stairs as ALICE descends.

Alice? Is she asleep or awake? She can't hear me. Alice! Wake up!

ALICE starts to sing a childhood song as she continues to descend. She stops singing.

ALICE: It's good to be here with the angels. Protected from harm by the angels. Father don't weep, I'm in heaven. See, my wings have grown too. Can't you hear the music?

BENJAMIN: Alice – !

ALICE: Listen! Shhh! Listen!

ALICE sings along to the music she hears. She stops

and turns towards the fire.

Oh, get back! Get back in the flames!

ALICE grabs the fire poker and stabs at the fire.

Back into your fiery hell, demon! Away! Away!

BENJAMIN: Alice!

ALICE: *(To BENJAMIN.)* Devil! Devil! Away!

ALICE lashes the air with the poker.

BENJAMIN: Alice, put that down! Alice! It's me, Benjamin.

ALICE: Back into the flames, you! Back into the flames of hell!

BENJAMIN: Alice!

MARTHA: Alice!

ALICE stops and looks toward MARTHA. ALICE advances slowly and menacingly.

ALICE: Evil must be cut at the very root and its head will no longer grow. Cut at the devil's root! Chop! Chop!

MARTHA: Benjamin, stop her! Stop her!

BENJAMIN: Alice!

BENJAMIN seizes ALICE's hand and takes the poker from her. ALICE changes in her demeanour. She falls to her knees.

ALICE: I'm an unworthy creature, Lord, strike me down! I'm a wretched sinner, a wretched, wretched sinner! Forgive me! Forgive me!

BENJAMIN replaces the poker and crosses to the SR door.

MARTHA: Where are you going?

BENJAMIN: She needs a doctor.

MARTHA: And leave me here with this mad woman!

BENJAMIN: She needs a doctor! Out of my way!

BENJAMIN exits through the SR door.

MARTHA: Benjamin! Benjamin!

ALICE starts to sing her childhood song again. Sound of the front door closing off. ALICE ascends the stairs and exits through the mezzanine door. MARTHA looks at the pistol and then to the mezzanine door. She ascends the stairs. Lightening flash, followed by a thunderclap. She exits through the mezzanine door. Blackout. In the blackout there is the sound of a struggle between ALICE and MARTHA. The struggle culminates with the sound of a gunshot.

Scene 5

Present day. Saturday 4.25 p.m.

Lights up. The storage box is gone. CRAIG stands in the room.

TRISHA: Craig?

CRAIG: What the fuck! What the hell are you doing to me!

TRISHA: It's what you're remembering, Craig.

CRAIG: Bullshit it's what I'm remembering! It's hypno tricks!

TRISHA: No, Craig.

There is a knock on the SR door.

Come in.

The door opens and OLLIE enters.

OLLIE: Ah, you're...

TRISHA: We're just taking a break, to clear our heads a bit. I won't be a minute.

TRISHA exits through the US door.

OLLIE: What happened? Craig?

CRAIG: I could sue her for psychological trauma.

OLLIE: What did you see? Craig?

CRAIG: Just the crap she was putting into my head that she wanted me to see, that's what.

OLLIE: Who were you? Okay, I think I was him.

CRAIG: What?

OLLIE: Benjamin, Benjamin Stokes. I'm sure I was him.

CRAIG: Oh, Jesus.

OLLIE: Who were you, Craig?

CRAIG: It's just hypno tricks, Toots.

OLLIE: Who did she make you think you were then? Martha? Was it?

CRAIG: I'm done here.

OLLIE: Craig, tell me please. I want to know.

CRAIG: Why?

OLLIE: I want to know what happened to us... to Alice.

CRAIG: Okay, if you really want to know, I shot her – she shot her, I mean.

OLLIE: Martha.

CRAIG: What she's getting me to think. Happy?

OLLIE: With the duelling pistol? When I'd gone to fetch Doctor Mulford – Benjamin had?

CRAIG: She's good, even the names match up.

OLLIE: Why?

CRAIG: What?

OLLIE: Why did you shoot her?

CRAIG: I didn't shoot anybody, like I say –

OLLIE: Why did Martha shoot her? Craig?

CRAIG: It was in self defence. She was attacking her with a candlestick.

OLLIE: A candle –

CRAIG: It was a great big bloody brass one. She already chucked one at me – *her* – and was about to clout her with the other one.

OLLIE: You had a pistol. Couldn't you have just shot her in the leg or the arm or something?

CRAIG: What?

OLLIE: You could've locked her in her room till I'd fetched Doctor Mulford.

CRAIG: Look –

OLLIE: He would have examined her, had her put away in a –

CRAIG: She was attacking me – *her!* It was life or death.

OLLIE: Was it.

CRAIG: Yes, it was! Look, listen to us, Toots, none of this is real, it's just stuff she's burning into our heads with her hypno tricks.

OLLIE: We know it's real.

CRAIG: What?

OLLIE: It happened, it's been well documented. We drugged her and killed her – you killed her and made it look like suicide.

CRAIG: Look, I didn't kill anybody you stupid, fucking woman!

The sound of arguing voices is heard in the fireplace once more. CRAIG crosses to the fireplace. The arguing subsides.

(*Shouting up.*) Hey, up there, techies, you're not fooling us you know. Do you hear me? Some of us that is.

The SR door opens and TRISHA enters.

OLLIE: We heard them again – the voices.

CRAIG: (*Derisively.*) Voices. That's me done here.

TRISHA: You've agreed to stay until six.

CRAIG: You've got enough.

TRISHA: No, not yet.

CRAIG: I've given you enough. You've still got her.

TRISHA: I need you both.

CRAIG: I've let you screw around with my head long enough, Ms Watkins.

TRISHA: That's not what I'm doing, Craig.

CRAIG: Isn't it.

TRISHA: No.

CRAIG: Well I disagree. You're lucky I don't sue you for psychological trauma. My flask please.

TRISHA: Craig –

CRAIG: I'll be back for it – after I get out of this party costume. And I expect that money in my account pronto otherwise there'll be trouble, Ms Watkins, with a capital T – kiss.

CRAIG is about to exit through the SR door.

TRISHA: I'll pay you extra. If you stay.

CRAIG: How much extra?

TRISHA: You too, Ollie, I'll give the same to you.

OLLIE: I don't want it.

TRISHA: Another thousand.

CRAIG: For us both.

OLLIE: I said I don't want it.

CRAIG: Then I'll have hers.

TRISHA: Craig –

CRAIG: Two or nothing.

TRISHA: Okay. To stay until six and do what I ask you.

CRAIG: It depends what it is.

TRISHA: I need to take you back again, both of you, to finish what we've started. Okay?

CRAIG: I haven't said yes yet. I'm thinking. Look, why don't you just let us both in on what you're doing. We can play along – better in fact – if we know what we need to do – say. I've done sales before, I can act. And I'm sure Toots can too, eh Toots?

TRISHA: Will you please stop calling me that!

CRAIG: See, she's spirited, you'll get a good performance out of her.

TRISHA: Craig –

CRAIG: No, listen, what are we doing here – freeing the ghosties. (*Calling up.*) Hey, if you can hear me up there, ghosties, we're sorry for what we did.

TRISHA: Craig –

CRAIG: Alice, we're sorry for what we did – me and Toots – we're sorry we drugged you and tried to get up banged up in a nut house. And I'm sorry I shot you – not me, Martha. (*Going to his knees melodramatically.*) We're sorry, we're sorry, we're sorry, we're sorry. (*To TRISHA.*) Something like that. I could do it again if you need it from a different angle or you want me to say something else – although I personally think that was pretty good. Go on, Toots, your turn.

TRISHA: I'm afraid it's not quite that simple, Craig.

CRAIG: No, didn't think it would be somehow.

TRISHA: I'll need to regress you again.

CRAIG: Then no.

TRISHA: What?

CRAIG: N.O. No. It's not worth it for two extra. I want five.

TRISHA: Craig –

CRAIG: If you want me you'll pay it.

TRISHA: It's too much.

CRAIG: Not to me it isn't.

TRISHA: I can't.

CRAIG: Then I won't. You've still got Ms Gullible. She'll be happy to play along.

TRISHA: You need to do this, Craig.

CRAIG: Need to now?

TRISHA: What you'll be doing for them you'll be doing for you.

CRAIG: What?

TRISHA: You both will. I 'see' you, Craig – and Ollie – as tormented in your own way as Benjamin and Martha. What you do for them here you'll be doing for you.

CRAIG: Nice try, Ms Watkins, nice try. She might believe your mumbo jumbo, but I'm sorry I don't. I'll be back for my flask.

CRAIG is about to exit through the SR door.

TRISHA: I know you're looking for her, Craig.

CRAIG: Sorry?

TRISHA: I said you're looking for her.

CRAIG: Who?

TRISHA: You know who. And if you leave now you'll never see her again.

CRAIG: Where is she?

TRISHA: She's safe.

CRAIG: What's that supposed to mean?

TRISHA: I think you know what it means, Craig.

CRAIG: No.

TRISHA: Do you want me to spell it out?

CRAIG: Yeah spell it out.

TRISHA: Let's just say your last contact with her left her a little bruised – emotionally and otherwise.

CRAIG: I never laid a finger on her if that's what you're implying.

TRISHA: Let's just say booze does have a way of blurring the memory somewhat.

CRAIG: I never touched her. What's she been telling you?

OLLIE: Who are you talking about?

CRAIG: You stay out of this, this is between me and her. Where is she?

TRISHA: Like I've said, Craig, she's safe.

OLLIE: You're talking about her aren't you – Emily?

CRAIG: I said stay out of this, Toots.

OLLIE: What did he do to her?

CRAIG: I didn't do anything to her, she's making stuff up.

OLLIE: Did he hurt her?

CRAIG: No he didn't.

OLLIE: If you did I swear I'll –

CRAIG: (*Aggressively.*) Swear you'll what, Toots!

TRISHA: Craig?

CRAIG: (*Easing off.*) I never laid a finger on her. Where?

OLLIE: Is she okay?

TRISHA: Yes.

CRAIG: You better not be saying this just to blackmail me, Ms Watkins, in front of the cameras in order to get me to stick around and do the rest of your show.

TRISHA: No, Craig. This bit will be cut.

CRAIG: Damn right it will be, otherwise I'll sue the pants off you. Where's she hiding? With you? She'll come running back, that I foresee. You're not the only Psychic around here, Ms Watkins. Although you don't fool me. I actually don't believe you could foresee you way out of a paper bag.

TRISHA: You took her to a bar called Stanleys – when you met. You'd won some money on the dogs that day, a dog called

Boneshaker – correct? You were feeling flush. Money in you pocket to spend on ‘recreational’ things – money perhaps that should’ve gone to pay off certain debts... debts still owing. Certain people are getting impatient. George Tyler for one. Not someone to get on the wrong side of. You said she could stay. You had conditions. When she left you my guides helped me find her.

CRAIG: Where?

TRISHA: By the river.

CRAIG: Which one?

TRISHA: The one in London.

OLLIE: What was she...? Was she about to...?

TRISHA: Perhaps, if I hadn’t found her.

OLLIE: She was going to?

CRAIG: Don’t believe her, Toots, she’s making this up.

TRISHA: No, Craig.

CRAIG: It’s just for her show. A bit of drama to boost her ratings. What you told me it’s nothing she couldn’t have told you herself.

TRISHA: All of it?

CRAIG: I’m not convinced.

OLLIE: It’s her, it’s her, isn’t it?

CRAIG: What?

OLLIE: Alice?

CRAIG: Where?

OLLIE: Emily... Emily was Alice.

CRAIG: Oh Jesus!

OLLIE: Wasn’t she? That’s how we’re all connected here – in the past... and now.

CRAIG: I’ll leave you two fruitcakes to it.

OLLIE: Is she here? Is she?

CRAIG: Is she? The woman, up there... that was her, Millie, wasn't it?

TRISHA: No, Craig.

CRAIG hurries up the stairs.

CRAIG: *(Calling.)* Millie? Millie are you here?

TRISHA: Craig.

CRAIG: Millie? Are you in there? Millie?

CRAIG stands outside the mezzanine door. He tries the handle. It's locked.

TRISHA: Craig, you're wasting your breath.

CRAIG: *(Knocking.)* Millie? Millie? If you're there, Millie, come out.

TRISHA: Craig.

CRAIG: Is she?

TRISHA: It was Alice you heard.

CRAIG: *(Derisively.)* Right. *(To door.)* If you're in there, Millie... You'll come running back. You will.

CRAIG descends the stairs.

Game over.

TRISHA: Not yet.

CRAIG: Game over. And seven g in my account asap.

TRISHA: To stay until six and allow me to regress you again.

CRAIG: I want to see everything before you show anything of this... to anyone. I haven't forgotten my flask.

TRISHA: Craig? Craig?

CRAIG exits SR.

OLLIE: We can't do this without him, can we?

OLLIE goes to the SR door.

(Calling off.) Craig, I'll give you what's she's paying me... if you stay. Do you hear me?

CRAIG appears at the SR door.

CRAIG: I hear you. What, your five g?

OLLIE: My five g.

CRAIG: Why?

OLLIE: Because I... Because I believe what's happening here is real.

CRAIG: She really has sold it to you, Toots.

OLLIE: To stay until six and to do what she asks you... and to stop calling me Toots.

TRISHA: It's a pretty good offer, Craig, I'd take it if I were you.

OLLIE: *(To TRISHA.)* Okay.

CRAIG: I haven't said yes yet.

OLLIE: You're turning it down?

CRAIG: I didn't say that either. I want it in writing.

OLLIE: I promise.

CRAIG: Not good enough.

OLLIE: I don't have a pen and paper on me.

TRISHA: I do.

TRISHA takes out a pen and paper from her bag.

The five I owe you plus Ollie's five.

CRAIG: The seven you owe me.

TRISHA: Craig?

CRAIG: You promised seven to stay until six, that was before she offered me her five, remember?

TRISHA writes.

TRISHA: (To OLLIE.) Sign and witness, Ollie.

CRAIG: It's all on camera.

OLLIE does so. TRISHA gives the paper to CRAIG. He checks it.

And if this isn't in my pocket when I come to there'll be hell to pay.

OLLIE: Who do you want first?

TRISHA: Both of you.

OLLIE: What – ?

TRISHA: You need to go back together – at the same time.

OLLIE: But –

TRISHA: You're strongly connected... at least you were. It's what's needed now.

CRAIG: Come on, Toots – sorry, Olivia – let's get this over with so we can all go home.

OLLIE: What do you want us to do?

TRISHA: Do?

CRAIG: She's just told you.

OLLIE: I mean once were... there. What do we do... together?

TRISHA: It will soon become clear. Craig let's have you in the chair for this and Ollie on the chaise again.

CRAIG: And make it something nice this time, none of this traumatic stuff. A nice fantasy perhaps about what I'm going to be doing with twelve g.

TRISHA: No promises, Craig. Lie back please, Ollie. Eyes closed both of you.

Blackout. Regression SFX.

Scene 6

OLLIE and CRAIG's regression/1887. Saturday 10.30 p.m.

During the following scenes TRISHA remains watching, but away from the action so as not to interfere. OLLIE and CRAIG remain where they are in their regression with eyes closed. They barely move as they register what takes place in the scene. Lights up. The fire is lit. An empty box sits somewhere in the room. BENJAMIN examines an accounts book and turns the pages incredulously. He coughs violently into his handkerchief. There are traces of blood. The faint sound of sobbing is heard from behind the mezzanine door. BENJAMIN fearfully looks up to the door.

BENJAMIN: *(Calling.)* Alice?

BENJAMIN starts to ascend the stairs. The sound of the front door is heard off. The sobbing stops. The SR door opens. MARTHA stands in the doorway. She has a walking cane.

MARTHA: Oughtn't you to be in bed?

BENJAMIN: *(Pointing to the box.)* It's empty!

MARTHA: It was needed.

BENJAMIN: But there was almost –

MARTHA: It was needed! I had staff to pay off, debts to pay! You don't know, you've been ill. I haven't... troubled you with it.

BENJAMIN: I want to see accurate detailed records of each transaction, every outgoing clearly –

MARTHA: Oh be quiet!

BENJAMIN: I just don't... I just don't believe the whole lot could've been spent in closing down the –

MARTHA: Are you accusing me of lying?

BENJAMIN: We're practically bankrupt!

MARTHA: You are accusing me of lying.

BENJAMIN: Where have you been?

MARTHA: Out.

BENJAMIN: Where?

MARTHA: I will not be ordered around like your poor wife was.

BENJAMIN: Out spending my money on your –

MARTHA: *Your* money! If I hadn't...

BENJAMIN: Hadn't what?

MARTHA: Go to bed!

BENJAMIN: Shot her? Killed her?

MARTHA slaps BENJAMIN. BENJAMIN crumples. He sits and coughs into his handkerchief.

MARTHA: How dare you! How dare you accuse me of that! Everybody knows she took her own life. Everyone that is, except you. Look at you! I should never have fallen for you. I thought you were courageous, a leader... a man. You're just a pathetic, weak –

The sound of sobbing is heard once more from behind the mezzanine door.

Who's here?

BENJAMIN: It's her! I told you I heard –

MARTHA: Alice is dead!

MARTHA ascends the stairs.

(Calling.) Who's there?

BENJAMIN: It's *her*!

MARTHA: Quiet!

MARTHA stands outside the mezzanine door. She puts her hand to the handle. Blackout. Brief regression SFX.

Scene 7

OLLIE and CRAIG's regression/1887. Some months later. Evening.

Lights up. The accounts book and the empty box are gone. OLLIE sits up on the chaise. CRAIG remains where he is. Both still have their eyes closed. BENJAMIN sits in a chair. He has a blanket about his shoulders and handkerchief to his lips. He coughs and checks his handkerchief for blood. The fire dies. BENJAMIN scans the air above him. The sound of ALICE's half-whispered voice echoes about the room.

V.O. ALICE: Benjamin... Why?... Benjamin.

BENJAMIN: Forgive me. Forgive me.

OLLIE: *(Still with eyes closed.)* Forgive me. Alice, forgive me.

BENJAMIN falls to his knees. OLLIE mumbles some of the prayer with BENJAMIN.

BENJAMIN: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy will be done on Earth as it is...

Sound of front door off.

Give us this day... forgiveness for our trespasses... Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from... deliver us from...

The SR door opens. MARTHA stands in the doorway with her walking cane. She looks menacingly at BENJAMIN. CRAIG opens his eyes. His face becomes menacing. BENJAMIN looks to MARTHA. OLLIE opens her eyes and does the same.

Evil.

MARTHA approaches BENJAMIN. She lifts her cane to strike him. CRAIG also raises his hand. BENJAMIN cowers. So does OLLIE.

No!

Blackout. Brief regression SFX.

Scene 8

OLLIE and CRAIG's regression/1888. Evening.

Lights up. Sound of BENJAMIN is heard upstairs, coughing violently and crying out. OLLIE lies back on the chaise. She coughs and cries. MARTHA paces the

room, walking cane in hand. CRAIG somewhat shadows her.

MARTHA: *(Calling upward.)* Shut up! Shut up!

CRAIG: *(Calling upward.)* Shut up!

BENJAMIN lets out a cry and falls silent. OLLIE sits up. MARTHA starts to ascend the stairs followed by CRAIG. The sound of ALICE's childhood song is heard. It seems to move about the room. MARTHA and CRAIG desperately scan the air.

OLLIE: *(Looking up.)* Forgive me, Alice, forgive me.

OLLIE starts to fervently whisper the Lord's prayer. MARTHA swishes the air wildly with her cane.

MARTHA: Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop!

CRAIG: *(Crying out and covering his ears.)* Stop!

Blackout. Brief regression SFX.

Scene 9

OLLIE and CRAIG's regression/1889. Evening.

Lights up. OLLIE is on her knees, still fervently whispering her prayer. CRAIG sits in a chair and is rocking in a disturbed manner. MARTHA sits in another chair with a blanket about her shoulders. She holds a hip flask. She is distracted and lost within herself as she sings ALICE's childhood song. CRAIG weeps as he rocks himself. Blackout. Brief regression SFX.

Scene 10

OLLIE and CRAIG's regression/1889. Some weeks later. Evening.

Lights up. Thunder and lightning. The building is on fire. OLLIE is now praying out loud. The shrieks and choking of MARTHA is heard from upstairs as she pounds on the inside of the mezzanine door. CRAIG bangs on an imaginary door.

MARTHA: *(Off. Crying out.)* Help me! Help me!

CRAIG: *(Crying out.)* Somebody! Help! Help me! Please! Somebody!

Help!

Blackout. More thunder and lightning.

Scene 11

Present day. Saturday 5.00 p.m.

All sounds cut out. Lights up. The sound of a woman is heard whispering 'help me, help me' from behind the mezzanine door. OLLIE looks towards the door. CRAIG, dazed and confused, slowly ascends the stairs.

CRAIG: Alice?... Alice?... Alice?

The mezzanine door suddenly opens. EMILY stands in the doorway in a bloody nightgown. She produces the duelling pistol from behind her back and points it at CRAIG. CRAIG, terrified, stumbles back down the stairs. EMILY descends while pointing the gun at him.

OLLIE: Forgive us, Alice, forgive us!

At the bottom of the stairs CRAIG falls to his knees. EMILY holds the gun close to him.

CRAIG: Don't... Please don't... No!

OLLIE: Forgive us!

CRAIG: Please don't... Please don't shoot... Please... Please...
(Starting to weep.) Please...

EMILY slowly lowers the pistol. The furious knocking starts up on the floor above. CRAIG flinches and cries out. EMILY looks up. TRISHA breathes rapidly and convulses. She seizes the poker from the fireplace and moves menacingly towards CRAIG and OLLIE.

TRISHA: (In a voice not her own.) Kill them! Kill them! Kill! Kill! Kill!

EMILY takes a sharp intake of breath as she feels a force now within her. CRAIG and OLLIE cover their heads to shield themselves. EMILY steps in front of TRISHA and raises her hand.

EMILY: No! No, release now, Father. Release them. Release.

TRISHA: (In a voice not her own. Plaintively.) Alice.

TRISHA lets the poker drop. She reaches out slowly and embraces EMILY.

Oh, Alice.

TRISHA convulses and falls to her knees. EMILY exhales sharply. She breathes rapidly and surveys the air above her. CRAIG looks up dazed and traumatised. He hurries through the SR door.

OLLIE: (Recognising.) Emily?

EMILY hurries up the mezzanine stairs.

Emily? Emily?

EMILY exits through the mezzanine door. OLLIE ascends the stairs. OLLIE stands at the mezzanine door.

Emily?

She tries the handle

(Knocking. To mezzanine door.) Emily please, I just want to talk to you. Emily?

TRISHA sits in a chair and takes deep breaths to recover herself. She scans the air above her.

(To mezzanine door.) Emily... if you can hear me... I'm... I'm sorry. I'm sorry for what happened. I would like to see you... talk to you.

TRISHA: Leave her be. She has your number.

OLLIE descends the stairs a little.

OLLIE: You planned all this... together?

TRISHA: Not all.

OLLIE: Was it... *him*, or were you just...?

TRISHA: It was him.

OLLIE: He would've... with that?

TRISHA: Yes, he would've.

OLLIE scans the air.

OLLIE: Are they... gone?

TRISHA nods.

All?

TRISHA nods again. There is the sound of the front door closing off. TRISHA exits through the SR door. OLLIE returns to the mezzanine door.

(To mezzanine door.) Emily, I have a room if you need a place to stay. For however long you want to.

TRISHA enters SR. She holds CRAIG's costume trousers.

TRISHA: Someone left in a hurry.

She reaches into the pocket and takes out the paper. She then replaces the poker in the fireplace.

You'll be glad to get out of that, I'm sure.

OLLIE begins to descend the stairs.

OLLIE: How much of this are you going to...? *(Picking up from TRISHA's look.)* You're not. There is no programme, is there? No cameras, no episode, no series.

TRISHA: It was the only way I could bring you both here – him anyway, you probably would've come. Besides, this was too important for me... for that. Go now.

OLLIE: Tell her – *ask* her – to call me... Please.

OLLIE crosses to the SR door.

What... What do you mean?

TRISHA: Mean?

OLLIE: What you said, that this was too important... for you? What did...? *(Realisation.)* You were him – weren't you? Jacob, Jacob Tilbury, you were him... Alice's father... weren't you?

TRISHA: No... not her father – not Jacob... I was Alice's mother... Sarah Tilbury.

OLLIE: *(Emotionally.)* Oh! I'm... I'm so... so...

OLLIE exits through the SR door. TRISHA crosses to it and closes it. The mezzanine door opens. EMILY stands in the doorway. She has cleaned the make-up from her face and is now dressed in her everyday clothes.

EMILY: Are you... okay?

TRISHA: You?

EMILY: She came again, into the room, just now. The blood was gone. She was smiling. She spoke to me.

TRISHA: What did she say?

EMILY: All must be forgiven... All must be forgiven. Then she... left. (*CRAIG and OLLIE.*) Are they...?

TRISHA: Not him. Your sister's getting changed.

EMILY descends the stairs. She surveys the space above.

EMILY: Free.

EMILY and TRISHA hug. EMILY crosses to the SR door. She looks back to TRISHA before exiting, closing the door behind her. TRISHA surveys the room briefly. She fetches her bag and takes another brief look up to the ceiling to the spot where the knocking was heard. She exits through the US door.

Curtain.