

# Audition Piece #4 - Cynthia, Felicity,

THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND / 2801.

Magnus  
Hound

FELICITY White please.  
[MRS DRUDGE pours.]  
MRS DRUDGE [To MAGNUS.] Black or white, Major?  
MAGNUS White please.  
[Ditto.]  
MRS DRUDGE [To CYNTHIA.] Sugar, my lady?  
CYNTHIA Yes please.  
[Puts sugar in.]  
MRS DRUDGE [To FELICITY.] Sugar, miss?  
FELICITY Yes please.  
[Ditto.]  
MRS DRUDGE [To MAGNUS.] Sugar, Major?  
MAGNUS Yes please.  
[Ditto.]  
MRS DRUDGE [To CYNTHIA.] Biscuit, my lady?  
CYNTHIA No thank you.  
BIRDBOOT [Writing elaborately in his notebook.] The second act, however,  
fails to fulfil the promise. . . .  
FELICITY If you ask me, there's something funny going on.  
[MRS DRUDGE's approach to FELICITY makes FELICITY jump to her feet  
in impatience. She goes to the radio while MAGNUS declines his biscuit,  
and MRS DRUDGE leaves.]  
RADIO We interrupt our programme for a special police message. The  
search for the dangerous madman who is on the loose in Essex has now  
narrowed to the immediate vicinity of Muldoon Manor. Police are ham-  
pered by the deadly swamps and the fog, but believe that the madman  
spent last night in a deserted cottage on the cliffs. The public is advised  
to stick together and make sure none of their number is missing. That  
is the end of the police message.  
[FELICITY turns off the radio nervously. Pause.]  
CYNTHIA Where's Simon?  
FELICITY Who?  
CYNTHIA Simon. Have you seen him?  
FELICITY No.  
CYNTHIA Have you, Magnus?  
MAGNUS No.  
CYNTHIA Oh.  
FELICITY Yes, there's something foreboding in the air, it is as if one of  
us—  
CYNTHIA Oh, Felicity, the house is locked up tight—no one can get in—  
and the police are practically on the doorstep.  
FELICITY I don't know—it's just a feeling.  
CYNTHIA It's only the fog.  
MAGNUS Hound will never get through on a day like this.  
CYNTHIA [Shouting at him.] Fog!  
FELICITY He means the Inspector.  
CYNTHIA Is he bringing a dog?  
FELICITY Not that I know of.  
MAGNUS —never get through the swamps. Yes, I'm afraid the madman  
can show his hand in safety now.  
[A mournful baying hooting is heard in the distance, scary.]

CYNTHIA What's that?!

FELICITY [*Tensely.*] It sounded like the cry of a gigantic hound!<sup>8</sup>

MAGNUS Poor devil!

CYNTHIA Ssssh!

[*They listen. The sound is repeated, nearer.*]

FELICITY There it is again!

CYNTHIA It's coming this way—it's right outside the house!

[*MRS DRUDGE enters.*]

MRS DRUDGE Inspector Hound!

CYNTHIA A police dog?

[*Enter INSPECTOR HOUND. On his feet are his swamp boots. These are two inflatable—and inflated—pontoons with flat bottoms about two feet across. He carries a foghorn.*]

HOUND Lady Muldoon?

CYNTHIA Yes.

HOUND I came as soon as I could. Where shall I put my foghorn and my swamp boots?

CYNTHIA Mrs Drudge will take them out. Be prepared, as the Force's<sup>9</sup> motto has it, eh, Inspector? How very resourceful!

HOUND [*Divesting himself of boots and foghorn.*] It takes more than a bit of weather to keep a policeman from his duty.

[*MRS DRUDGE leaves with chattels. A pause.*]

CYNTHIA Oh—er, Inspector Hound—Felicity Cunningham, Major Magnus Muldoon.

HOUND Good evening.

[*He and CYNTHIA continue to look expectantly at each other.*]

CYNTHIA AND HOUND [*Together.*] Well?—Sorry—

CYNTHIA No, do go on.

HOUND Thank you. Well, tell me about it in your own words—take your time, begin at the beginning and don't leave anything out.

CYNTHIA I beg your pardon?

HOUND Fear nothing. You are in safe hands now. I hope you haven't touched anything.

CYNTHIA I'm afraid I don't understand.

HOUND I'm Inspector Hound.

CYNTHIA Yes.

HOUND Well, what's it all about?

CYNTHIA I really have no idea.

HOUND How did it begin?

CYNTHIA What?

HOUND The . . . thing.

CYNTHIA What thing?

HOUND [*Rapidly losing confidence but exasperated.*] The trouble!

CYNTHIA There hasn't *been* any trouble!

HOUND Didn't you phone the police?

CYNTHIA No.

FELICITY I didn't.

8. Cf. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Hound of the Baskervilles*: "Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!"

9. "Be prepared" is the motto of the Boy Scouts, not the British police force.

MAGNUS What for?

HOUND I see. [*Pause.*] This puts me in a very difficult position.

[*A steady pause.*] Well, I'll be getting along, then. [*He moves towards the door.*]

CYNTHIA I'm terribly sorry.

HOUND [*Stiffly.*] That's perfectly all right.

CYNTHIA Thank you so much for coming.

HOUND Not at all. You never know, there might have been a serious matter.

CYNTHIA Drink?

HOUND More serious than that, even.

CYNTHIA [*Correcting.*] Drink before you go?

HOUND No thank you. [*Leaves.*]

CYNTHIA [*Through the door.*] I do hope you find him.

HOUND [*Reappearing at once.*] Find who, Madam?—out with it!

CYNTHIA I thought you were looking for the lunatic.

HOUND And what do you know about that?

CYNTHIA It was on the radio.

HOUND Was it, indeed? Well, that's what I'm here about, really. I didn't want to mention it because I didn't know how much you knew. No point in causing unnecessary panic, even with a murderer in our midst.

FELICITY Murderer, did you say?

HOUND Ah—so that was not on the radio?

CYNTHIA Whom has he murdered, Inspector?

HOUND Perhaps no one—yet. Let us hope we are in time.

MAGNUS You believe he is in our midst, Inspector?

HOUND I do. If anyone of you have recently encountered a youngish good-looking fellow in a smart suit, white shirt, hatless, well-spoken—someone possibly claiming to have just moved into the neighbourhood, someone who on the surface seems as sane as you or I, then now is the time to speak!

FELICITY I—

HOUND Don't interrupt!

FELICITY Inspector—

HOUND Very well.

CYNTHIA No. Felicity!

HOUND Please, Lady Cynthia, we are all in this together. I must ask you to put yourself completely in my hands.

CYNTHIA Don't, Inspector. I love Albert.

HOUND I don't think you quite grasp my meaning.

MAGNUS Is one of us in danger, Inspector?

HOUND Didn't it strike you as odd that on his escape the madman made a beeline for Muldoon Manor? It is my guess that he bears a deep-seated grudge against someone in this very house! Lady Muldoon—where is your husband?

CYNTHIA My husband?—you don't mean—?

HOUND I don't know—but I have a reason to believe that one of you is the real McCoy!<sup>1</sup>

1. The genuine article (slang).