

The Real Inspector Hound

Brief Synopsis

The *Real Inspector Hound* is a short, one-act play by Tom Stoppard. The plot follows two theatre critics named Moon and Birdboot who are watching a ludicrous setup of a country house murder mystery, in the style of a whodunit. By chance, they become involved in the action causing a series of events that parallel the play they are watching.

Character Descriptions

Moon: Second string theatre critic of a major newspaper in London. Youngish (30's), nerdy but with an academic quality, self-absorbed, generally nervous, well educated, obsessed with his status, poor self-esteem, prone to outbursts, generally unhappy with his lot in life. Ambitious but impotent in his career. Self-absorbed, self-conscious, and self-righteous at times. He is here to review the play that's being performed.

Birdboot: First string theatre reviewer with the "other" major London paper. Married to a woman he does not love or have anything in common with. He desires the glamorous life of the theatre and uses his power to gain sexual favors from young up and coming actresses. Possibly chubby, balding, not particularly attractive, formal, prissy, likes to indulge his desires and impulses. He's secure in his career and rather likes who he is. Can be self-righteous and overly defensive. He is a hypocritical (morally), pompous, superior and larger than life. He is here to review the play that's being performed.

The characters below are in the "the play" that's being performed.

Felicity Cunningham: She is late 20's to early 30's. Aristocratic but probably a "working girl" back in London. She is the current paramour (but short lived) to Simon Gascoyne. She is very attractive, a best friend of Cynthia (Lady Muldoon), old school chum, tennis player, wealthy, snobby, society girl. As a woman spurned, she has a temper.

Cynthia Muldoon: The Lady of the Manor and wife of the missing Albert Muldoon (gone 10 years). She is wealthy, upper class, sweet, entertaining and enjoys her station in life, albeit she has kept herself chaste and remained devoted to her missing husband all this time. She has arranged this weekend's gathering at Muldoon Manor. She is good friends with Felicity and they are tennis and bridge players. She inherited the manor from her husband and endeavors to keep it going and live the aristocratic lifestyle but in a modern age. She is fashionable with good taste and dresses "the part" of the Lady of the Manor.

Simon Gascoyne: Young, dashing, self-absorbed, flirty and interested in Cynthia Muldoon. He has had a recent fling with Felicity and casts her aside to pursue his professed true love Cynthia. He could be a gold digger or a mad man, it is very unclear.

Mangus: Initially he is presented as the half-brother of the missing Albert Muldoon who just recently "showed up" at Muldoon Manor. He is disguised to look older and is wheelchair bound. He is a Major in the military. He is revealed (facial hair removed, lap blanket tossed aside, smartly dressed) at the end of the play to be both The Real Inspector Hound, the long-lost Albert Muldoon **and** Puckeridge (the third string critic at another London newspaper). He, as Magnus is smug, aggressive and somewhat hateful. As Albert, is happy to be reunited with Cynthia, as the inspector he is sharp and aggressive) and as Puckeridge he is triumphant.

Hound: He is perhaps the "madman". He is an imposter but is dressed like Sherlock Holmes. Or quite basically, he is just an actor playing Hound, probably young but made to look older as part of his disguise. We see him later taking the role of a theatre critic dressed as "Inspector Hound". His overall motivation is unclear. He could conceivably be "in on it" with Puckeridge.

Mrs. Drudge: The dutiful maid who sees and hears everything that goes on. She is middle aged, not well educated but not without some learned formality as she works for nobility. She is the only house servant at the manor it seems. She may be a bit bohemian and or spacey and perhaps not very smart. She lives in the nearby village and rides her bike to work.