

# The Hound of The Hammertons

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With original songs by Jez Lowe*

## **Cast:**

La Porte, European investigator- Lucas  
Lady Hammerton, owner of Hammerton Hall- Violet  
Crowley, Lady Hammerton's butler- Archie  
Betty, the maid – Esmae T

Ken Kenny, owner of the exclusive dog summer boot camp "Pawditz" for incurably naughty dogs (later revealed as Battersea Von Kennel the famous dog thief) – Henry H  
Jimmy Chew, his long suffering assistant- Jack  
Jemima, trainee camp counsellor- Charlotte

Shaggy, attending dog camp with his dog Muttley- Alfie  
Thelma, attending dog camp with her dog Nancy- Milly  
Fred, attending dog camp with his dog Bones- Aidan  
Delilah, attending dog camp with her dog Ruby- Imogen  
Irene, attending dog camp with her dog , Mirabelle- Annabel

Julian, local boy, head of the Explorers gang- Spencer  
Georgia, Julian's neighbour and friend- Skyelah  
Anne, Julian's sister, always getting lost in the woods- Esme S  
Richard, Julian's brother, younger but far better at map reading- Chael

## Prologue

*La Porte appears in a spotlight at Hammerton Hall, carrying his trademark briefcase with INTERPOL written on the side and narrates directly to the audience.*

**LA PORTE** Looking back, I have tried to piece together the events of those fateful days. I had been given an almost impossible mission. And so, I was hot on the heels of the most famous missing dog in history. The trail led me, in the heat of summer, to the sleepy village of Green Hammerton. There were some strange goings on all right and I had a sinking feeling it might be linked to my case. La Porte is the name. But you can call me Ferme. And this is my story.

## **SONG- HOUND OF THE HAMMERTONS**

WHO'S THAT  
CREEPING ROUND THE STREETS,  
LURKING IN THE TREES, RUSTLING THROUGH THE FIELDS?  
WHO'S THAT  
SCUFFLING IN THE DARK, SKULKING IN THE PARK,  
WITH A DIM AND DISTANT BARK  
NOBODY DARES TO SAY ITS NAME,  
BUT EVERYONE'S THINKING JUST THE SAME

IT'S THE HOUND OF THE HAMMERTONS,  
EVERYONE IS TREMBLING IN THEIR BED,  
IT'S THE HOUND OF THE HAMMERTONS,  
IT FILLS YOU POOR HEART WITH FEAR AND DREAD,  
NOBODY HAS SEEN IT,  
BUT EVERYBODY DREAMS OF  
THE HOWLING, GROWLING HOUND OF THE HAMMERTONS.

*At the end of the song the company create a soundscape of a huge storm concluding with the sound of a ghostly howling.*

**Scene One:** *At Hammerton Hall*

*Lights fade up.*

*Lady Hammerton and her butler Crowley are at the window watching the storm. Another howl makes them jump.*

**LADY H**      What on earth is that noise, Crowley? Surely no-one would be foolish enough to walk a dog in this storm?

**CROWLEY**    Indeed, m'lady.

**LADY H**      The entire village has gone dog mad during lockdown. Every morning I expect to wake up and find the estate deserted and the whole place run by dogs.

**CROWLEY**    Indeed, m'lady.

*Another howl makes them jump. Betty the maid enters carrying a tea tray and she jumps as well.*

**LADY H**      What is that, Crowley? And put that down, Betty, before you drop it!

**BETTY**        Yes miss. *(She puts the tray down)*

**CROWLEY**    They're saying it's the Beast, madam.

**BETTY**        The Beast!

**CROWLEY**    The Hound of The Hammertons.

**LADY H**      There's no such thing. It's just an old story.

**CROWLEY**    There was a lot of talk when I went down to collect the dry cleaning. Simon Mack's van got attacked! You should see the claw marks on the side.

**BETTY**        It was awful, Miss. And an old dog collar torn to shreds next to it.

**CROWLEY** There's all sorts of rumours flying round the Bay Horse.

**LADY H** Well, I wish I had time to stand around gossiping like you two. But I'm far too busy battling with the council, who are still trying to build houses on my paddock. I've had seven calls to four different people.

**CROWLEY** Are you winning, ma'am?

**LADY H** I finally managed to strike up a deal with them.

**BETTY** To clear off and never come back to Hammerton again.

**LADY H** Betty! Please! I told them the paddock and woodland were already in use for a charitable group.

**CROWLEY** They are?

**LADY H** My sixth call was a nice young volunteer from some society or other. She said that the council will lay off the development plans if they have a week-long dog-training camp on our grounds. I'm imagining Crufts but in Green Hammerton.

**CROWLEY** So you agreed ma'am?

**LADY H** Naturally. Otherwise they'll be dogging me for the rest of the month!

**BETTY** Very funny madam. But I doubt they'll be going ahead in this weather. It's supposed to be summer! And what about the beast?

**LADY H** There is no beast!

*Another ghostly howl and they all look at each other in alarm.*

**BETTY** Oh my! What if they all get... eaten!

**LADY H** I've said it before and I'll say it again... There is no beast!

*A final howl. Music. Lights fade as La Porte appears and narrates once more.*

**LA PORTE** I had settled in well at my rooms at the Bay Horse, disguised as French exchange student volunteering at Sporting Start Summer Camp. I started gathering information for my case and recognised at once that Betty could always be relied upon to keep me up to date with the news of the village, and with an endless supply of excellent cake. It was easy to strike a bargain with her. I would use my influence to help her start her own tea rooms, that would rival any you might see on the streets of Paris. For Paris is where I made my home back then and even the French President, Espanol Macaroon, and his faithful dog Croissant were piling on the pressure for me to find the missing hound. I wondered whether the woodland camp she spoke of might hold some clues?

**Scene Two:** *A woodland clearing.*

*The five kids attending the Pawditz camp enter with their disobedient dogs, led by the slightly flustered Junior Camp Leader, Jemima. The dogs sniff excitedly about, apart from Nancy who goes to sleep. Her owner Thelma is reading while walking.*

**JEMIMA** I know the start of camp was delayed by the storm, which was unfortunate, but it's looking much brighter now. So if you all want to..erm... drop your packs right here in this clearing then this is where we'll be making camp for the night.

**DELILAH** Here? But it's the middle of nowhere! The brochure had a spa and an outdoor pool?

**JEMIMA** Er, I think there's a bit of a pond over there?

**DELILAH** Where?

**JEMIMA** Just there where your dog is...

**DELILAH** That's not my dog. I mean look at it.

**SHAGGY** Muttley, get back here you daft mutt! (*Pulls the dog back*) He never listens to me.

**DELILAH** And who are you?

**SHAGGY** Simon, sixth Earl of Scotton, but everyone just calls me Shaggy.

**DELILAH** Shaggy?

**SHAGGY** Well, it's that, or your lordship...

**FRED** Shaggy it is then. I'm Fred, and this is Bones. (*Bones barks hello*) all right, no need to show off. That's Delilah, we go to school together, and her dog Ruby. And I just met these two at the gate. Reenie, right?

**IRENE** Its Irene, but I like Reenie better. And this is Mirabelle.

**DELILAH** She's gorgeous!

**IRENE** She may look cute but she's a real prima donna.

**FRED** Just like Delilah!

**DELILAH** I am not!

**FRED** And the one in the book is my sister Thelma.

**THELMA** Unless you are actually dying, Fred, can you just keep the noise down. I'm getting to the crucial part of what happens when you physically step into a black hole. Made all the more exciting by me imagining you being the one stepping into it...

**FRED** So, that's Thelma, and her dog is Nancy. She's always asleep. Sometimes I have to check she's still breathing...

**SHAGGY** Wish my mutt was always asleep... Oi! Get out of there! See, I told you he never listens?

**JEMIMA** So, now you have all met. I am your Junior Camp Leader, Jemima, and it falls to me to officially welcome you all to Pawditz. I was expecting Mr. Kenny and his assistant to meet us here but...

**FRED** Ken Kenny the famous dog trainer!

**THELMA** I don't trust him.

**FRED** I thought you weren't listening.

**THELMA** I'm multi tasking. Rule One. Never trust a man who has the same first and last name.

**IRENE** I'd never thought of that. It does sound a bit...

**THELMA** Hinky.

**FRED** No-one actually says hinky in real life.

**SHAGGY** She's right though. It does sound a bit "hinky".

**THELMA** Thank you, your lordship.

**SHAGGY** Oh, do call me Shaggy.

**FRED** Please don't encourage her.

**JEMIMA** As I was trying to say...

**GEORGIA** (*off stage*) Aaaaaachoooooooooooo!!!

*The three children from the Explorer gang walk on to the stage, Georgia sneezes again and the others all look around.*

**JEMIMA** What now? Bless you! Err, well, erm ... Hello.

**JULIAN** Hello there, you haven't spotted a huge ghost hound running around here, have you?

**JEMIMA** Err, I beg your pardon?

**GEORGIA** (*Between sneezes*) Sorry about that, my friend Julian here doesn't have a very good sense of humour, do you Jules? (*Elbows Julian in the ribs then sneezes.*)

**JULIAN** I thought I was pretty good.

**RICHARD** The problem is he forgets when he's meant to keep quiet!

**THELMA** Hmm, ... hinky ...

**DELILAH** (*Georgia sneezes again*) Are you OK? I've probably got a tissue here. And who are you?

**GEORGIA** It's OK, I've got one here somewhere. Oh, I guess I should have introduced myself. (*Blows nose*) Georgia, nice to meet you all. And that guy over there is Richard, the one talking to the dog.

**RICHARD** He's talking to me.

**GEORGIA** We're The Explorers (*Sneezes again*) Oh and I guess I should also say, I'm allergic to dogs.

**THELMA** First of all, dogs can't talk, and humans can't talk to dogs, if they could, none of us would be here. It is a proven impossibility. And second of all, is it just me who finds it a little bit suspicious three underage explorer scouts are wandering around a forest alone?

**JULIAN** I assure you, we are fully capable of handling ourselves in these woods! We know this forest like the back of our hands. Richard here is an expert map reader. Georgia can track anything, and I am an all-round brilliant ... err leader. And together we form the almighty Explorer Gang, famed everywhere this side of Great Ouseburn.

**RICHARD** Well us three are OK, but I can't say the same for Anne. Remember last time? I never did get the smell of that bog out of my lucky socks. And Georgia's shoe is still somewhere in that mud!

**IRENE** Who's Anne?

**JULIAN** She's my sister. She's helping us to find the....

**RICHARD** A place to camp!

**JULIAN** Yes, exactly.

**RICHARD** And I am sure she won't be getting stuck in a bog this time.

*The walkie-talkie in Richard's hand crackles into life.*

**ANNE** Come in, come in. Richard, Julian, Georgia. Please respond. Repeat, please respond. Where are you? I am lost. Repeat I am lost. Over.

**GEORGIA** Oh no, not again.

**JULIAN** Maybe you spoke to soon Richard. Radio in our location. She has a compass, right?

**RICHARD** Copy. We hear you. We are in the Hammerton Hall woods. North-West of where we last saw you. You have your compass right, over?

**ANNE** Well I used to have it, does that count? It sorts of got swallowed by a... erm, bog.

**GEORGIA** Typical.

**RICHARD** What is it with her and bogs? Come in, Anne. Do you know where you are, over?

**ANNE** No, I'm lost, over.

**RICHARD** What's the last place you recognised?

**ANNE** Well I came out of the Ethelburga's route about an hour ago and now I'm next to a sign saying. Andy's Coffee Shack, this way. I can smell burgers, but no sign of the "you know what", over!

**FRED** What's the "you know what"?

**RICHARD** Err, its nothing. Anne just gets a bit dramatic sometimes.

**ANNE** I can hear you, you know. And I am not dramatic! Getting very lost several times, is proof that nature is ganging up on me!

**JULIAN** It's fine, we'll come and get you. Now just hold your position. I think I know where you are. Don't move! Over. Richard. Consult the map.

*Richard pulls out a map and plots a course.*

**RICHARD** Yep, looks like she's stranded just next to the Whixley footpath. Its a forty-minute journey if we make good speed.

**GEORGIA** We're on our way!

**JULIAN** Hold tight until we get there.

**ANNE** OK. I'll look out for "you know what", over!

**GEORGIA** Bye then. *(Sneezes)*

**JEMIMA** O-OK. Errm, good luck.

**RICHARD** We are going to need it.

*The Explorers exit the stage.*

**FRED** Well that was a bit weird.

**THELMA** Hinky, hinky, and even more hinky.

**SHAGGY** I wonder what they were up to. Eh, Muttley, get out of that bush!

**DELILAH** Who cares anyway. Let's just get this dog training over with and get out of here.

**IRENE** They're just some kids who want to have some fun in the summer holidays. I think they'll be fine.

**JEMIMA** As I was saying...err... Mr. Kenny must have been delayed.

**THELMA** Suspicious and now late. Interesting.

**JEMIMA** But there's nothing to stop us pitching our tents here and I'm sure he'll be here to start his award winning transformational classes with your, err, "special" hounds first thing in the morning.

**FRED** Special is right...

**JEMIMA** As Mr Kenny always says, there is no such thing as a truly bad dog, just a dog that is badly misunderstood...

**SHAGGY** Muttley, you daft dog! Stop eating the tent.

**IRENE**        *(looking around, all the dogs are misbehaving)* I'm not sure, but I think he might change his mind after meeting this lot....

**JEMIMA**      I'm sure he'll be here first thing, so why don't we all get some rest and....

**DELILAH**     This is a nightmare. I was supposed to go Monte Carlo.

**THELMA**      I was supposed to be on an internship at Nasa.

**FRED**         I was supposed to be playing tennis for England.

**IRENE**        Really?

**FRED**         Only a friendly, but even so. How about you Shaggy?

**SHAGGY**      Well, to tell the truth, I was at a bit of a loose end this summer. So I thought this might be fun...

**DELILAH**     Fun? What part of 'Pawditz Summer Boot Camp for incurably naughty dogs' can possibly be fun? In a tent.

**FRED**         In the middle of no-where.

**THELMA**      With zero 24/7 live linkup with the Hubble space telescope.

**SHAGGY**      Well, when you put it like that...

**IRENE**        And all because of this lot.

*They all look down at their dogs, who look back at them.*

**FRED**         And it's another fine mess you've got us into! The most conniving canines in the history of the world. *(All the dogs pause and look at him)* Yes, I see you, all of you! And don't give us those looks. Because *this* is all your fault!

*Music. The lights fade as the kids pop up a couple of triangular tents and crawl inside.*

**Scene Three:** *Later that night, outside the tents.*

*Mr. Kenny and his assistant Jimmy, in camouflage tree disguises, pop up from behind a bush.*

**KENNY** Never forget, Jimmy, that masters of disguise will always have the element of surprise.

**JIMMY** *(writing in notebook)* Elephant of surprise.

**KENNY** Not elephant, you numpty, element.

**JIMMY** *(still writing)* Yes sir, how do you spell “numpty”?

**KENNY** What are you doing with that notebook?

**JIMMY** Taking notes, sir.

**KENNY** Argh, I’m surrounded by idiots.

**JIMMY** I can’t see anyone, sir.

**KENNY** Here I am at the height of my career. So how on earth did I end up with an assistant like you?

**JIMMY** You sacked the rest of the team, sir?

**KENNY** All part of my master plan, young Jimmy Chew, which is unfolding exactly as I have planned.

**JIMMY** Oh, goody.

**KENNY** And now for the next part of my marvellously, malevolent scheme. Just stay there and keep quiet while I scope out the lie of the land.

*Kenny starts to tiptoe towards the tents, Jimmy follows tiptoeing close behind. They stop near the first tent.*

**JIMMY** What now, sir?

**KENNY** Which part of staying over there and keeping quiet did you not understand?

**JIMMY** I didn't have a note for that, sir.

**KENNY** Shush, for goodness sake! You'll wake them all up and we don't want to be seen...

**JIMMY** We don't?

**KENNY** No, we most certainly do not. I don't want to run the risk of being recognised at this point. That would put my very important, and very secret, plan at risk.

**JIMMY** *(writing again)* Secret plan. Got it.

**KENNY** Now, we just have to wait for these fiendishly foolish hounds to do what they do best. Escape! And we will be waiting to catch them... For they are five of the most expensive beasts this poxy village has ever seen. And I have high hopes for their futures as part of my personal collection...

**JIMMY** When you train them!

**KENNY** Train them?

**JIMMY** Dog classes!

**KENNY** Oh, yes of course, *train* them with my award-winning classes. But with dogs as special as these they are going to need an extra special course. Far, far away from these ungrateful children. And you, Jimmy, will assist me.

**JIMMY** I will?

**KENNY** Yes, I think you might come in handy after all. Quick, hide, I can hear someone moving inside.

*They hide out of sight behind a tree.*

**Scene Four:** *Outside the tents a few moments later*

*The dogs poke their heads out from the centre of the tents and discuss their predicament.*

**RUBY** This is so unfair!

**BONES** But it is the great outdoors! I say we just have to make the best of it.

**MUTTLEY** Hear, hear, old chap.

**NANCY** And she forgot to bring my favourite blanket. How can I sleep without it?

**BONES** You've been sleeping all day.

**NANCY** I was just resting my eyes.

**MIRABELLE** Be careful, it would be foolish to wake the humans. When this is the only peace and quiet that we get.

**RUBY** But, my point is, we shouldn't even be here! It's not like we've ever done anything really bad. Well, maybe once or twice...

**BONES** I have been a perfect gentleman to the last...

**MUTTLEY** Apart from that time with the...

**BONES** Never speak of it!

**MIRABELLE** Well, I have never put a paw out of place... And I certainly don't have time for these foolish little games! I have more important things to do!

**RUBY** So, then, we are all agreed. Why they brought us here is an absolute mystery!

**NANCY** Yes! And we shall prove it beyond a shadow of a doubt, that we all deserve to be sunning ourselves on the terrace at Wufflins, instead of being kept here, against our will, being treated like criminals!

*The dogs sing: "Dog house" song and the rest of the company join in.*

**SONG: DOGHOUSE**

WE WERE ONLY DIGGING HOLES  
AND BURYING OUR BONES,  
SEARCHING FOR THINGS THAT WE COULD CHEW,  
LEAPING LIKE A LOON, HOWLING FOR THE MOON,  
DOING ALL THE THINGS THAT DOGGIES DO,  
THEN WITH ONE WAG OF A TAIL,  
WE WERE SENT TO DOGGIE JAIL,

WE'RE IN THE DOGHOUSE NOW,  
WE'RE IN THE DOGHOUSE NOW,  
LOCKED UP IN THE POUND,  
HAVE MERCY ON US HOUNDS,  
WE'RE IN THE DOGHOUSE NOW.

WE ONLY TRIED TO RUN,  
TO SNIFF A FRIENDLY BUM,  
VISIT EVERY LAMPOST IN THE STREET,  
WALK AROUND THE LOOP  
WITH A LITTLE BAG OF POOP,  
THINK OF ALL THE FRIENDS THAT YOU COULD MEET,  
NOBODY SHOULD BLAME US,  
IF NOBODY CAN TRAIN US.

WE'RE IN THE DOGHOUSE NOW,  
WE'RE IN THE DOGHOUSE NOW,  
LOCKED UP IN THE POUND,  
HAVE MERCY ON US HOUNDS,  
WE'RE IN THE DOGHOUSE NOW

*As the song finishes, we see Mr Kenny and Jimmy tiptoeing towards the dogs heads with Jimmy holding a big net. Lights fade.*

**Scene Five:** *Back at Hammerton Hall*  
*Lady Hammerton is having breakfast.*

**LADY H** I didn't sleep a wink last night, with all that howling.

**BETTY** I don't think anyone in Yorkshire did, miss.

**CROWLEY** And I am sorry to report that another dog has gone missing from Whixley.

**BETTY** Oh no!

**CROWLEY** A prize Pomeranian, I heard. Her owner is very upset.

**BETTY** Oh no, not Pom-Pom! She loved my Eccles cakes at the church fair. Came back three times.

**LADY H** The owner or the dog?

**BETTY** Pom-Pom of course.

**CROWLEY** She is a little, er, highly strung.

**LADY H** Probably just the sugar rush from Betty's Eccles cakes....

**CROWLEY** But she hasn't been seen since last night.

**BETTY** When the howling started...

**LADY H** Yes, I remember, it kept me awake for hours!

**BETTY** Madam, you don't think....?

**LADY H** What, Betty?

**CROWLEY** What Betty is meaning, madam.... is....

**LADY H** Come on both of you, spit it out!

**CROWLEY/ BETTY** (*speaking together*) What if it *is* The Beast?

**LADY H** Fiddlesticks!

**BETTY** And there are the dogs...

**CROWLEY** And the children...

**LADY H** Out in the wood. My wood.

**CROWLEY** And if something odd *is* happening...

**LADY H** Then I'll be front page of the Village View for not sorting it out and we'll never get Hammerton Hall back open to the public.

**CROWLEY** Perhaps, m'lady.

**BETTY** Especially if someone gets eaten by the beast.

**CROWLEY** Hush, Betty.

**BETTY** What? There's no coming back from that!

**LADY H** I am sure there is a perfectly reasonable explanation. But until I find it, I will be taking matters into my own hands. I will find those children and make sure every hound is accounted for.

**CROWLEY** Very good, m'lady.

**LADY H** And you two are coming with me.

**BETTY** Oh, golly.

**LADY H** We are leaving at once. We shall get to the bottom of these strange goings on and be back in time for my game of croquet with Reverend Sarah! Come along!

*They head off towards the woods. The lights fade as La Porte appears at the hall and narrates the next part of his story.*

**LA PORTE** That was the day I was woken early by Betty as she gathered supplies for Lady Hammerton's impulsive journey into the woods. I decided immediately to follow them, determined to find some answers to my own mystery. Because I was running out of time. And the happiness of every citizen of Europe was hanging in the balance. They were all depending on me to make things right.

**Scene Six:** *Back at the tents, the next morning.*

*A rooster cock-a-doodle-doos from afar.*

*The dogs poke their heads out of their tents.*

**BONES** Arrrarraroooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

**MUTTLEY** Arrrarraroooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

**NANCY** Arrrarraroooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

**RUBY** Arrrarraroooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

*They all turn their heads to where Mirabelle should be, but there is nothing there!*

**MUTTLEY** Ruff! Ruff! Ruuuuffff!

*The kids wake up and come out of their tents, yawning and stretching. The dogs continue to whine and bark to get their attention.*

**SHAGGY** *(Yawns)* What is it now daft dogs?

**RUBY** Ruff!

**THELMA** You can't talk to dogs! But we can use science to solve the problem. According to Professor Roger Wilkinson's book on animal behaviour- that I happen to have here- it is obvious these animals are distressed!

**FRED** I think we can tell that, Thelma. It's just what are they distressed about!

**BONES** Ruff!

**DELILAH** Shall we ask Jemima? Is she still asleep?

**THELMA** I think she left earlier to set up some training exercises.

**IRENE** Errr .... guys. Where's Mirabelle?

**MUTTLEY** Ruff! Ruff, ruff!

**SHAGGY** She was here last night, wasn't she?

**IRENE** Yeah, but now she's gone. Where is she? Surely she hasn't run off.

**FRED** Reenie, are you sure she wasn't here a minute ago?

**IRENE** I'm sure. She's gone. And what good is a dog training camp if you don't have a dog?

**RUBY** Ruff.

**DELILAH** She agrees! See Thelma, maybe we can talk to dogs after all!

**FRED** Now then. Is everyone sure that Mirabelle's not here in camp?

**SHAGGY** What about if she ran off because of the training?

**IRENE** That's not like her! She'll always try new things, unless she has a better place to be.

**THELMA** According to Roger Wilkinson, dogs can make random decisions...

**IRENE** I don't care what your book says. I know my own dog, and she doesn't just run off for no reason!

*At this point Jemima walks on stage, covered with mud and with leaves in her hair. She is followed by the three Explorers.*

**JEMIMA** Well, this just isn't fair. I was to set up for a leisurely morning of dog training and instead almost drown in a boggy hole six feet under the ground. What sort of children are you? (*Gestures to*

*Explorers*) Pretending to be Explorer Scouts and then trapping innocent citizens in holes in the ground!

**JULIAN** It's not our fault, we thought you were the ...

**GEORGIA** *(interrupting him)* Something else. We thought you were something else!

**RICHARD** A "You Know What"!

**GEORGIA** So we built a "You Know What" trap!

**DELILAH** Arrghh! We don't have time for this, Reenies dog is missing! We need to find her!

**JEMIMA** What? A lost dog? You have got to be kidding me? Can this day get any worse?

**RICHARD** Yes, it can. If your dog has been eaten by ... The Beast!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**FRED** What beast?

**JULIAN** The Beast!

**GEORGIA** The Hound of Hammerton!

**RICHARD** Haven't you heard the howling? Anne nearly got scared to death by it last night before we found her, didn't you Anne? ... Anne?

**JULIAN** Don't tell me ...

*At this point his walkie talkie crackles into life.*

**ANNE** Hello , come in, Explorers. Hello, this is Anne. Repeat this is Anne. I am lost, I am lost, over!

**GEORGIA** Not again!

**JULIAN** Anne, what is your position, over?

**ANNE** Err ... Yeah. You know how you told me to cover the trap with the leaf net after we got the weird lady out.

**JEMIMA** I'm not the slightest bit weird! If anyone is, it's you crazy lot!

**ANNE** Well, I sort of fell in!

**GEORGIA** Seriously?

**JULIAN** OK. We're coming.

**JEMIMA** You are not going anywhere you... you... con-artist explorers, until you explain what on earth is going on!

**JULIAN** Well. It's like this. We are the Explorer Gang, famed for the capturing of the Beast of The North York Moors.

**RICHARD** Which turned out to be a tabby cat.

**JULIAN** And the tracking and locating of the horribly evil ... Tockwith Bird Beast.

**GEORGIA** Which turned out to be a really fat pigeon that had had a bath in the paint for the football markers...

**JULIAN** And now we are on the trail of the infamous Beast of Hammerton. We will capture it and then send it to Chester Zoo for it to be looked after properly, and free Hammerton from its ghostly howling forever!

**JEMIMA** This Beast doesn't exist.

**GEORGE** Yes it does!

**JEMIMA** Where's your proof then?

**RICHARD** There's the howling ....

**ANNE** Come in, come in. I see it, I see the beast!

**JULIAN** What?

**ANNE** I can see it, right now. It's smaller than what we thought.

**GEORGIA** Are you sure?

**ANNE** Yeah, it's very still, right above me just at the edge of the trap.

**RICHARD** Has it seen you?

**ANNE** I don't think so, it's not moving, I can only see its tail, over.

**JULIAN** Good. Hold your position.

**ANNE** Well what else can I do?

**RICHARD** Don't let it know you're there!

**ANNE** I think I hear voices.

**GEORGIA** What? OK, were coming to find you!

**JULIAN** Come on Explorers! This is it!

*They hurry off stage.*

**JEMIMA** Unbelievable! I don't look anything like a mythical dog beast...

**DELILAH** But is there a *real* dog beast on the prowl?

**THELMA** Scientifically speaking, extremely unlikely.

**IRENE**        Either way we still need to find Mirabelle!

**SHAGGY**      Well, she can't have gone far.

**DELILAH**     I think we should split up and look for clues?

**THELMA**      The percentages of us finding her are ...

**JEMIMA**      Better if we all start looking.

**FRED**         Agreed. So, why don't we just head off into the woods and have a good sniff about?

*They set off to search. The company join in and sing:*

### **SNIFFING ABOUT**

SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF  
SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF

SNIFFING ABOUT, SNIFFING ABOUT,  
POINT YOUR NOSE AND TRUST YOUR SNOUT,  
YOU KNOW IT SERVES YOU WELL,  
USE YOUR SENSE OF SMELL,  
SNIFFING ABOUT, SNIFFING ABOUT,  
NEWS AND CLUES AND FINDING OUT,  
YOU'VE GOT TO USE YOUR NOSTRIL,  
YOU'LL SOON FIND WHAT YOU'VE LOST,

WHEREVER IT WENT,  
JUST FOLLOW THE SCENT,  
GO SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF SNIFFING ABOUT

SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF  
SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF

SNIFFING ABOUT, SNIFFING ABOUT,  
SEEK AND SEARCH AND SLITHER AND SCOUT,

YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T GO WRONG,  
IF YOU JUST FOLLOW THE PONG,  
SNIFFING ABOUT SNIFFING ABOUT,  
THAT'S THE WAY BEYOND A DOUBT,  
YOU'LL SOON FIND WHAT YOU SEEK,  
IF YOU JUST FOLLOW THE REEK,  
WHEREVER IT GOES,  
JUST FOLLOW YOUR NOSE,  
SNIFF, SNIFF, SNIFF,  
SNIFFING ABOUT.

SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF  
SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF

**Scene Seven:** *Moments later.*

*Mr Kenny and Jimmy pop up from the bushes again.*

**KENNY** Those pesky do-gooding children. They're not meant to be heading off into the woods. Are they?

**JIMMY** No sir.

**KENNY** I gave that camp leader girl strict instructions to keep them here in this clearing.

**JIMMY** Yes sir.

**KENNY** Teenagers. Couldn't organise an escape from a paper bag.

**JIMMY** No sir, I mean, yes sir, I mean, whatever you say sir!

**KENNY** So here we are. And our nets are....?

**JIMMY** Empty, sir.

**KENNY** When they should be full of priceless specimens for my collection...

**JIMMY** It wasn't my fault, sir, that small scruffy one tripped me up and before I knew it the big white one had gone?

**KENNY** Gone where? Huge white poodles don't just vanish in the middle of the night.

**JIMMY** This one did, sir. Like magic!

**KENNY** Ridiculous. There is only one person in this wood this week who will be performing the vanishing dog act, and that is me.

**JIMMY** You sir? I don't understand.

**KENNY** I'm not paying you to understand my fiendishly clever scheme, but merely to assist me in carrying it out! And I will even let you take full, ah, credit for the outcome once we have finished.

**JIMMY** Me sir? Thank you, sir.

**KENNY** I may have been thwarted once but I will not be giving up that easily. This calls for phase two of my cunning plan...

**JIMMY** Phase two sir? Shall I bring my notepad?

**KENNY** No, no need for that. It might be classed as evidence, after all, if it fell into the wrong hands.

**JIMMY** Evidence of what?

**KENNY** Never you mind. And I think you will have your hands-or should I say paws- full for this next caper. Yes, I think you will fit nicely.

**JIMMY** Fit where, sir?

**KENNY** Come along, Jimmy Chew, you have a starring role to play in our next adventure. Hurry up now, to our woodland dressing room to prepare!

**JIMMY** Yes, sir, right sir, coming "on the double" sir!

*They head out of the clearing once more.*

**Scene Eight:** *Moments later again.*

*Lady Hammerton, Crowley and Betty walk into the clearing where the tents are. Crowley is carrying a map of the area and Betty is carrying a picnic basket.*

**CROWLEY** I could have sworn I heard voices madam, just moments ago.

**BETTY** I can't see anyone.

**LADY H** Not a soul in sight. Well, that really is the worst luck. Are you sure this is the right spot, Crowley?

**CROWLEY** According to the map, madam.

**BETTY** Is it the right way up?

**CROWLEY** Of course it is.

**BETTY** And what is that big splodge over there?

**CROWLEY** That's where we stopped for elevenses.

**BETTY** I don't remember a bush that looked like a big pile of marmalade.

**LADY H** Let me see.

**CROWLEY** Sorry m'lady. There appears to be a foreign object on the navigation system.

**BETTY** It's not foreign, I made it fresh last week.

**LADY H** No matter, Crowley, I think we are in the right place. But as to why the camp is deserted, I just don't know.

**BETTY** Unless, they've all been eaten!

**LADY H** Nothing is getting eaten on my watch! I won't stand for it!

**CROWLEY** Yes ma'am. Shall I just take the picnic hamper back to the hall?

**BETTY** That's a shame, Miss. I made your favourite.

**LADY H** Don't be silly, you two. I didn't mean the picnic!

**CROWLEY** Oh, very good m'lady.

**LADY H** I meant that no campers, canine or otherwise, will be torn limb from limb on my land!

**BETTY** Torn limb from limb! I knew I should have stayed in the kitchen.

**LADY H** There is no beast in the land who would dare attack Lady Hammerton! Betty, set up our picnic over there where we can keep watch.

**BETTY** Yes, Lady Hammerton.

**LADY H** And after a spot of lunch, Crowley, I may surprise you with what I learned at my last Karate lesson.

**CROWLEY** Oh dear, I mean, very good, ma'am.

**LADY H** Constant vigilance, Crowley! Never fear, Betty, if that beast dares to appear, he will find himself coming down to earth with such a bang that his bones will be rattling for a month!

*They head offstage to have their picnic. La Porte pops up from a bush nearby and narrates a little more.*

**LA PORTE** It was a very confused picture at this point with all the comings and goings. But the dog they were all looking for sounded suspiciously like the dog that I was tracking. And although this wasn't strictly a matter for Interpol, I had been drafted in by order of the Executive Supervisor of Eurovision himself, who we know has more power than any leader in the European Parliament. I had to find this precious dog, and fast! But then I heard about the tiny girl still stuck in a Beast-Trap....

**Scene Nine:** *Some time later.*

*The camp children, explorers and Jemima drift in from different sides with Ruby, Bones and Nancy, all looking exhausted.*

**GEORGIA** And we're back here again! And still no sign of Anne. We're going round in circles.

**JULIAN** Let's have a look at that map again.

*The explorers rest down and look at the map, a little apart from the camp kids.*

**THELMA** We've looked everywhere.

**FRED** And there's no sign of Mirabelle, Reenie.

**IRENE** This is awful.

**JEMIMA** And I'm definitely going to be out of a job.

**DELILAH** Look on the bright side, all the dogs seem to have turned over a new leaf. *(She pats Ruby fondly).*

**SHAGGY** Even Muttley's behaving himself. Hang on, where is Muttley? Muttley? He's not here!

**JEMIMA** Oh no, not another one. I'll never get another job again!

*At this point something very unusual happens and the dogs begin to speak. The humans look increasingly surprised and amazed as the scene unfolds.*

**BONES** That's it! Not Dr. Muttson. This has gone too far. I am taking matters into my own hands.

**THELMA** Who said that?

**BONES** It is I, of course, the renowned Sherlock Bones, in a cunning disguise.

**SHAGGY** Is it me or is that dog talking to us?

**THELMA** It can't be possible, but I'm hearing it too!

**BONES** I am investigating The Case of The Disappearing Dog. Lady Mirabelle and Dr. Muttson are not the first dogs to vanish from the care of Mr. Ken Kenny.

**IRENE** They're not? Do you mean more dogs are missing?

**JEMIMA** I don't know anything about that! I'm just here for a summer job! I knew I should have trained as a lifeguard instead...

**BONES** My esteemed colleague Dr. Muttson has disappeared, and I fear he may be in grave danger.

**DELILAH** Dr. Muttson? Is he talking about your Muttley?

**BONES** We must act swiftly.

**NANCY** Then I shall assist you, for I am none other than the infamous investigator, Nancy Chew.

**SHAGGY** Whoah! Another one! (*Looking at Ruby*) And what about you? Or are you really a dumb mutt?

**RUBY** How dare you, you scruffy oik-ship! Don't you know who I am?

**SHAGGY** Well, err, no...

**RUBY** I am, of course, the world-famous mystery solver, Ruby-Dooby Doo! And if anyone needs saving here, I'll be the one to do it!

**BONES** Come then, friends, the game is afoot!

*The dogs run out sniffing, dragging the camp kids behind them. The explorers watch them go in stunned surprise.*

**SHAGGY** Whoa! Wait for me!

**GEORGIE** Quick! Follow those talking dogs!

**RICHARD** But what about Anne?

**GEORGIE** She'll be fine! She's always fine!

**JULIAN** She'll understand. Let me have the walkie-talkie Richard? Anne, come in. What is your status, over?

**ANNE** Er, still stuck, over.

**JULIAN** Well, you just stay right where you are.

**ANNE** That will be easy....

**JULIAN** We'll be there as soon as we've found out-

**RICHARD** What the talking dogs are up to!

**GEORGIA** Talking dogs who are world famous detectives!

**JULIAN** We'll be back to get you as soon as we can. Promise!

*The explorers sprint out leaving the walkie-talkie behind.*

**ANNE** A-OK Explorers. Understood. Er, I don't want to worry you but the Beast has started moving around. First it was on it's hind legs and now moving on all fours in your direction. Are you there? Richard? George? Julian? The Beast is heading towards you!

*The walkie talkie crackles and dies.*

*At that moment Lady Hammerton, Crowley and Betty pop up from behind a bush.*

**LADY H** Did you hear that Crowley? There *is* a beast!

**CROWLEY** Indeed my lady.

**BETTY** The Hound of the Hammertons! Oh no!

**CROWLEY** And it rather sounds like it's heading straight for us.

**LADY H** Jolly good.

**BETTY** We'll be eaten alive!

**LADY H** Don't be such scaredy cats! We will simply lie in wait behind this bush and as soon as the Beast is within striking distance I will.....

**CROWLEY** Will what m'lady?

**LADY H** Shush! Someone's coming! Get down!

*Lady Hammerton and Crowley duck down and then put an arm out to push Betty down as well.*

*At this point Bones leads the pack of dogs, camp kids and explorers onto the stage from one side. From the other comes Jimmy, dressed in a dog suit with Mr. Kenny hiding behind.*

*Bones and Jimmy bump noses in the middle and everyone crashes to a halt.*

**JIMMY** Aaargh! I mean, woof.

**EXPLORERS** *(together)* The Beast!

**BONES** No, a suspect!

**JIMMY** Aarrgh! A talking dog!

**KENNY** *(pops up)* Did he say talking dog? *(hides again)*

**THELMA** *(to kids, about Jimmy)* Another one?

*Lady Hammerton leaps out and Crowley and Betty pop up, watching through their fingers in fear.*

**LADY H** Stop right there you horrid Hound! Hi- ya!

*She karate chops Jimmy who rolls over...*

**JIMMY** Ow! That hurt! Mr Kenny! Help! I need help!

*Mr. Kenny rushes out from his hiding place holding his big net.*

**KENNY** I'll get you, you pesky mutt! You'll be the pride of my collection!

**NANCY** I don't think so!

**RUBY** Ruby-Dooby Dooooooooo!

*Mr Kenny heads straight for Bones, is tripped by Ruby and Nancy and he catches Jimmy in the net.*

**JIMMY** Ow. Again.

**JEMIMA** Mr. Kenny? And Jimmy, is that you?

**SHAGGY** Why is Mr. Kenny's assistant dressed up as a dog?

**JIMMY** He told me to!

**BONES** To lure the remaining dogs towards that net.

**DELILAH** Why would Mr. Kenny want to do that?

**IRENE** I don't understand!

**BONES** Because the identity of Mr. Ken Kenny is simply an alias.

**THELMA** Told you we couldn't trust him!

**BONES** For this man is none other than my arch nemesis, the dastardly dog thief, Battersea Von Kennel!

**KENNY** And I would have got away with it as well if it weren't for you pesky dogs and your meddling kids!

**LADY H** I think I'll be handling this one from here, children. Inspector Nunns and I play bingo together every Tuesday, and he will know exactly what to do with this villain...

**JULIAN** So there was no Beast after all.

**GEORGIA** That's rubbish.

**RICHARD** Double rubbish.

**IRENE** But if he was pretending to be the Beast, where's my Mirabelle?

**FRED** And your Muttley?

*The dogs growl and advance towards Mr. Kenny.*

**KENNY** Call them off! It wasn't me! I haven't done anything with your dogs! My stupid assistant was meant to snaffle them last night, but he didn't manage to catch a single one!

**DELILAH** So where are they?

**CROWLEY** Excuse me, my lady, but can you hear...

**BETTY** *(scared)* More howling!

**EXPLORERS** *(all together, they think there might be a beast after all)* Brilliant!

**SHAGGY** Listen! Is that music coming from behind the tents?

**IRENE** And is that Mirabelle?

*Shaggy and Irene are drawn towards the music. He reappears almost immediately with Muttley.*

**BONES** Dr. Muttson, my oldest friend!

**MUTTLEY** Ah, Sherlock, you've made it just in time!

**JEMIMA** In time for what?

*The music swells, lights fade, and the children clear the tents to reveal a new area where Mirabelle is wearing a sparkly outfit and big purple headphones.*

*At this point La Porte pops up and speaks to them all.*

**LA PORTE** Everybody stay right where you are! There are only seconds remaining for me to achieve my impossible mission. I would have been here sooner, but I had to send Anne off to get a burger from Andy's Coffee Shack to recover!

**EXPLORERS** You found Anne?

**LA PORTE** I will explain everything, but right now...(To Lady Bow Wow) My esteemed lady-

**LADY H** Yes?

**CROWLEY** I don't think he means you Madam.

**LA PORTE** - you must listen to me!

**THELMA** Quick, someone stop him!

**DELILAH** Who is he anyway?

**LA PORTE** I am Interpol's Inspector, Ferme La Porte.

**SHAGGY** (*surprised, as in "no way"*) Shut the door!

**BONES** Please wait, young friends, I suspect he has the interests of your canine companion at heart.

**LA PORTE** I bring an important message from the Executive Supervisor of Eurovison. They have been trying to reach you for weeks, but you disappeared without trace! In this briefcase I carry the live-link Zoom codes for the first ever Bonio-Vision song contest from Paris, France! Millions have already tuned in! And they are all waiting for you, my Lady, to open the show? Please say you, accept? Please? The world is waiting...

**MIRABELLE** If my fans wish it. Make it so.

**LA PORTE** *(opening the case and tapping in a code)* Mission accomplished,  
*(checks his watch)* And right on time. Boy, I'm good.

**JIMMY** Hey, I know who it is! She's only the biggest thing on Tik-Tok!

*The whole company speak at the same time.*

**ALL** It's Lady Bow-Wow!

*The company sing while Mirabelle takes centre stage on the dance routine:*

### **LADY BOW WOW SONG**

BOW WOW, BARK AND GROWL,  
GRRR GRRR, SCREECH AND HOWL  
RUFF RUFF, YAP YAP  
THAT WAS ME SINGING  
BOW WOW, BARK AND GROWL,  
GRRR GRRR, SCREECH AND HOWL  
RUFF RUFF, YAP YAP  
THAT WAS ME SINGING

HEAR ME SINGING, ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT,  
DID YOU HEAR MY SONG?  
MY BARK IS WORSE THAN MY BITE,  
WHY DON'T YOU SING ALONG  
AS I GO...  
BOW WOW, BARK AND GROWL,  
GRRR GRRR, SCREECH AND HOWL  
RUFF RUFF, YAP YAP  
THAT WAS ME SINGING  
BOW WOW, BARK AND GROWL,  
GRRR GRRR, SCREECH AND HOWL  
RUFF RUFF, YAP YAP  
THAT WAS ME SINGING

THE HOUND OF HAMMERTON JUST ISN'T REAL,

THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR  
THE ONLY LEGEND AROUND HERE IS ME,  
THAT'S ALL YOU NEED TO HEAR,  
AS I GO...

BOW WOW, BARK AND GROWL,  
GRRR GRRR, SCREECH AND HOWL  
RUFF RUFF, YAP YAP  
THAT WAS ME SINGING  
BOW WOW, BARK AND GROWL,  
GRRR GRRR, SCREECH AND HOWL  
RUFF RUFF, YAP YAP  
THAT WAS ME SINGING

*Lights snap to black. The end.*