

"THE CASE OF THE COUNT FORMERLY KNOWN AS DRACULA"  
A Justin Thyme Mystery  
By Bruce Kane

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WARNING: No one shall make any changes to this play for the purpose of production. Publication of these plays does not imply its availability for production.

CHARACTERS:

JUSTIN THYME – Bogart like private eye

DRACULA – Your typical well dressed bloodsucker

EFFIE – Thyme's voluptuous secretary

THE STAGEHAND – Moves the sets and the furniture, handles all the props,  
Overworked and not happy about it.

VAN HELSING – Transylvanian professor

IGOR – Looks like the Hunchback of Notre Dame. Talks like Boris Karloff

MOLLY – Young, beautiful, well built

RENFIELD – Dracula's henchman

MARTHA – Leader of Dracula's harem of undead women.

THE GIRLS – Four Undead women who do Dracula's bidding.

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE – Dresses and talks just like Thyme

NURSE – Thyme's dedicated nurse

VAMPIRE MOLLY – The vampire version of Molly.

THE SET: A limbo set with no permanent structures. Stage Right is Thyme's desk. Up Stage Left is a table full of the props and effects that will be used during the play. Production and performance of sound effects and music cues are up to you.

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A Justin Thyme Mystery  
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*SOUND: BLUESY SAXOPHONE MUSIC LIGHTS*

*UP*

*(The Stagehand, dressed in black, stands unobtrusively behind the prop table. Justin Thyme enters wearing a fedora and trench coat. He walks to center stage and speaks directly to the audience.)*

THYME: It ended like most of my cases... with a stake through a vampire's heart. I'd just wrapped up the Moby Dick case - the whale did it - when Effie, my over developed secretary with the under developed typing skills pulsated into my office. *(Drumbeats accompany Effie's entrance)* She told me I had a letter.

EFFIE: Ya gotta lettah.

THYME: I told her to read it for me. Why dontcha read it for me, apple knees. She said reading wasn't part of her job description.

EFFIE: Readin' ain't part of my job description.

THYME: What is your job description?

EFFIE: You oughta know, you wrote it.

THYME: Oh yeah. *(to audience)* Effie had so many other assets I must have left out the part about reading. I told her to hand me the letter. *(to Effie)* Hand me the letter, cumquat cheeks. *(Effie hands him the letter).* *(to audience)* She did. She's good that way. I said "thanks". *(to Effie)* Thanks. *(to audience)* She said, "anytime, Thyme."

EFFIE: No I didn't. I said, if you need for me for anything else, just whistle. You know how to whistle don'tcha? You just put your lips together and...

THYME: And what?

EFFIE: You're the gumshoe. You figure it out.

*(Effie exits to the sound of drumbeats. Thyme watches her go.)*

THYME: I watched her pulsate out of my office, returned my tongue to the general vicinity of my mouth and opened the letter. The postmark read... Transylvania.

*SOUND: OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING*

THYME: Some guy named Van Helsing was dropping a dime to tell me he needed help.

*(Van Helsing enters, sits at a desk and begins writing)*

VAN HELSING: Dear Mr. Thyme. My name is Abraham Van Helsing. I need your help. My country has recently suffered a sudden and mysterious shortage of virgins

THYME: What country hasn't? Frankly, I didn't see the problem.

VAN HELSING: You may not see this as a problem, but virgins happen to be my country's second leading export.

THYME: If virgins were his country's second leading export, I didn't want to know what the number one export was.

VAN HELSING: You don't want to know what the number one export is. Unless this problem is solved, Transylvania...

*OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING*

VAN HELSING: Unless this problem is solved, ... *(pauses)* "my country" faces certain economic disaster.

THYME: Economic disaster. That could be big. But, then again, we're talking about a country with the gross national product of Hoboken, New Jersey. Nevertheless, the guy sounded desperate.

VAN HELSING: I'm desperate Thyme.

THYME: How could I refuse? I mean I wanted to refuse. Who the hell wants to go to Transylvania in the off season? But what could I do? It's my job. The name's Thyme... Justin Thyme. I work for the F.B.I.... The Fictional Bureau of Investigation. I handle the toughest, dirtiest cases in English literature. That's right. I'm a fictional detective. So, I caught the first train out of town and followed Van Helsing's directions.

*SOUND: RAILROAD TRAIN*

*(The Stagehand slides in a chair. Thyme sits facing stage left. The Stagehand wheels in a window frame and begins waving a flashlight to indicate the passing lights outside a moving train)*

VAN HELSING: You leave the Transylvania Station about a quarter to four. You read a magazine...

*(The Stagehand hands Thyme a magazine.)*

VAN HELSING: And you're in Krysetstamor. I recommend breakfast in the diner.  
*(The Stagehand hands Thyme a dish of ham and eggs.)*

VAN HELSING: Nothing could be finer, than to have your ham and eggs in Asia Minor.

*(Thyme stands. The Stagehand moves the chair and the props.)*

THYME: When I reached Transylvania, I got off the train and made my way to The Mausoleum, a dive on the wrong side of Cemetery Row. The right side of Cemetery Row being... the cemetery. Transylvania was that kind of town and The Mausoleum was my kind of joint... dark, dank, dingy, damp, decaying, decrepit, dreary, dismal and depressing. It reminded me a dame I was once crazy about. But that's another story. The place was filled with the usual contingent of hustlers, low lifes, bottom scrapers and zombies. And I don't mean that metaphorically. I felt right at home. I found an empty stool and took up residence.

*(The Stagehand rolls over a bar and two stools. Thyme sits down at the bar. From behind the bar, Igor pops up, looking much like the Hunchback of Notre and sounding a lot like Boris Karloff.)*

IGOR: Well, well. If it isn't Justin Thyme, Fictional Detective.

THYME: Igor... I should have known. Long time no see. IGOR: A very long time.

THYME: Still in the monster making business?

IGOR: I was only a silent partner.

THYME: Sure. Sure... Whatever happened to your old boss?

IGOR: After the townspeople burned down the castle and ran him out of town, he moved to Bucharest. Opened up a disco. You could say he's brought... "new life to the town."

THYME: You could say it. I never would.

IGOR: What brings you to Transylvania Thyme?

THYME: The railroad.

IGOR: Always cracking wise, ain't ya? What are you doing here?

THYME: I could tell you, but then I'd have to kill you.

IGOR: You tried that once.

THYME: Oh yeah... A guy named Van Helsing told me to meet him here.

IGOR: Van Helsing?

THYME: Yeah... Van Helsing.

IGOR: Abraham Van Helsing? THYME:

Yeah, Abraham Van Helsing. IGOR: Doctor

Abraham Van Helsing?

THYME: Yeah. Doctor Abraham Van Helsing.

IGOR: Never heard of him.

THYME: Don't play dumb with me, Igor.

IGOR: I'm not playing.

THYME: *(to audience)* I needed to know what Igor knew and the only way I was gonna find out was to put the screws to him. *(to Igor)* You know this guy. I know you know this guy. You know I know you know this guy. I know you know I know you know this guy... You know I know you know I know you know...

IGOR: *(as though he's being tortured)* Okay... Okay. Stop. Stop. I'll tell you what you want to know.

THYME: I know.

IGOR: I know you know.

THYME: I know you know I....

IGOR: You passed Van Helsing on your way in.

THYME: *(looks around)* Which one of these dead beats is he?

IGOR: You got the dead part right.

THYME: What're you talkin' about?

IGOR: When I said you passed him on your way in, I was talking about the cemetery.

THYME: What's he doin' in the cemetery?

IGOR: Well, he ain't taking cha cha lessons.

THYME: You telling me my client's dead.

IGOR: If he wasn't when they buried him, he sure is now.

THYME: What he die of?

IGOR: Nobody knows for sure. One day he was moving around just like you and me... Well, you, anyway. The next day they were planting him.

THYME: Suspicious, don't you think?

IGOR: This is Transylvania, Thyme. Every death around here is suspicious.

THYME: *(to audience)* I wondered if Van Helsing's death had anything to do with the missing virgins. I wondered if it had anything to do with the letter he wrote me. I wondered... *(Molly enters and takes the stool next to Thyme)*...what it would be like to lose myself in those big blue eyes... To taste those red delicious lips. To fondle those...

MOLLY: Buy a girl a drink?

THYME: Sure thing, honey hips. Igor...

IGOR: Yes, master?

THYME: A Bloody Mary for the little lady. The same for me.

IGOR: Two Bloody Marys coming up.

THYME: Igor is famous for his Bloody Mary's.

MOLLY: Really? And what are you famous for?

THYME: Not getting' involved with dames who ask me what I'm famous for. *(to audience)* Don't get me wrong. I like dames. Long legged dames, well built dames, good lookin' dames, great lookin' dames... Incredibly gorgeous dames. I don't play favorites. But I never get involved. In my business, getting involved could also get you dead... Permanently.

IGOR: *(serves up two Bloody Marys)* Two Bloody Marys.

*(Molly downs hers in one gulp)*

MOLLY: That's the best Bloody Mary I've ever had.

IGOR: That's because I make it with... real blood.

MOLLY: In that case I'll have another.

THYME: *(to audience)* A dame who could drink me under the table. It was love at first sight. From that moment on we were inseparable. Like two peas in a pod. Like cherries in a bowl. Like hot fudge and ice cream... Like.

MOLLY: You think we could knock off the food analogies and get out of here?

TYME: There was something about her that made me forget about Van Helsing. Forget about the missing virgins. Forget about... uh... uh... *(can't remember what he was supposed to forget)* Forget about a lot of stuff I can't think of right now.

MOLLY: By the way... You can call me Molly.

THYME: Why?

MOLLY: Because it's my name.

*(The Stagehand brings in two chairs and sets them side by side. Thyme helps Molly into one of the chairs, then sits next to her and picks up a pair of invisible reins. The Stagehand gives Molly the once over, then gives Thyme the thumbs up.)*

THYME: I decided to take Molly out for a little carriage ride in the country. *(The Stagehand makes the sound of horses hooves.)* Just her and me, the moonlight, a blanket and a shaker of Bloody Marys. Unfortunately the country we happened to take our little ride in was ... Transylvania.

**OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING SOUNDS**

**OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING**

*(The Stagehand turns an electric fan on Thyme and Molly and then sprays water into the wind created by the fan.)*

MOLLY: I just love the Carpathian Mountains during the rainy season. Don't you, Thyme?

THYME: She was a strange girl... Incredibly well built, but strange *(points)* Look.

MOLLY: What is it Thyme?

THYME: It's the bridge.

MOLLY: What about the bridge?

THYME: It's out.

MOLLY: The bridge is out?

THYME: Yeah... That's what I just said... The bridge is out.

MOLLY: Oh, what will we do? Just the two of us here, alone, in the forest with only a blanket, a shaker of Bloody Marys and a burning mutual attraction that must be satisfied before it consumes the both of us.

*(Thyme does a slow take toward the audience.)*

THYME: Transylvania is your hometown, sweet knees. Isn't there a Motel 6 around here where we could "get in out of the rain?"

MOLLY: I'm afraid not.

THYME: What about that joint up ahead?

MOLLY: *(frightened)* You mean that dark, foreboding castle perched precipitously over those jagged rocks being pounded by an angry and merciless sea?

THYME: Yeah, that castle.

MOLLY: *(lightly)* It looks charming enough.

*(Thyme helps Molly out of the carriage. The Stagehand rolls in a door. Thyme presses the doorbell.)*

SOUND: WOMAN'S SCREAM.

*(When no one answers, Thyme rings the bell again)*

SOUND: WOMAN'S SCREAM

*(The door is opened by a weird little man with an equally weird voice)*

RENFIELD: Yes? May I help you? *(laughs evilly)*

THYME: The name's Thyme... Justin Thyme... The doll here calls herself Molly.



RENFIELD: And, why is that?

THYME: Because it's her name. We were taking a carriage ride in the country.

RENFIELD: How romantic.

THYME: Yeah... Then the storm hit and washed out the bridge.

RENFIELD: That darn bridge. *(laughs evilly)*

THYME: Any chance we could camp out here until the storm blows over?

RENFIELD: I'll check with the master.

*(Renfield shuffles off)*

MOLLY: Seems like a nice enough fellow.

THYME: For a gargoyle.

*(Thyme and Molly step through the door.)*

MOLLY: Kind of cozy for a dark and foreboding castle perched precipitously on a precipice over an angry and merciless sea, don't you think Thyme?

THYME: Yeah...Sure. If your idea of a decorating choice runs to early mortuary. One second it was just Molly and me and then...

*(Dracula mysteriously appears. He sounds just like Bela Lugosi)*

DRACULA: Good evening...

THYME: Some guy in a tuxedo made it three. Where did you come from?

*(Note: All of Dracula's lines should be delivered as though they are fraught with a sinister and dramatic meaning. Dracula is somewhat of a ham)*

DRACULA: Bucharest. I just flew in and, boy, are my arms tired.

THYME: Old joke.

DRACULA: Joke? I never joke. I have no sense of humor.

THYME: Something about this guy gave me the willies. I don't know if it was the slicked back hair, the pale white complexion or the blood dripping from his fangs.

DRACULA: Allow me to introduce myself. I am... Dracula.

*OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING.*

DRACULA: Count... Dracula.

*OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING.*

DRACULA: You are guests in... Dracula's Castle.

*OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING*

THYME: The name's...

DRACULA: Thyme... *(ominously)* Yes, I know.

THYME: *(to audience)* He knew my name, before I even told him. Strange... Very strange. *(suspiciously)* I don't think we've ever met. I would have remembered. How do you know my name?

DRACULA: Renfield told me.

THYME: Oh... Right. So you haven't said yet, if it's alright for me and "tasty toes" here to camp out until the rain stops.

DRACULA: Mi casa es su casa.

THYME: Thanks, Count.

DRACULA: The "girls" will show you to your room Mr. Thyme.

THYME: Girls? *(to audience)* I turned to see five skinny broads with pale faces and straight black hair parted in the middle. *(The "girls" glide in)* They all wore full length, skin tight, black dresses. If I didn't know better, I would've thought I'd stumbled into a Cher concert.

*(The play continues)*

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