

Excerpts from....
“ALIAS CINDERELLA”
A Justin Thyme Mystery
by Bruce Kane

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“ALIAS CINDERELLA”
A Justin Thyme Mystery
by Bruce Kane

CHARACTERS:

JUSTIN THYME: Tough talking, hardboiled Bogart like detective

EFFIE: Thyme’s voluptuous secretary

PRINCE CHARMING: Self described “God’s gift to women.”.

ANNA REKSIC: Sexy femme fatale and old adversary of Thyme’s.

CINDERELLA: Young, sweet talking damsel in distress

PINOCCHIO: Young shoe maker with a chip on his shoulder

LACKEY: Prince Charming’s unappreciated servant.

URSULALA/VINNY: Anna’s ugly stepdaughter/Gangster

PALACE GUARDS

MEMBERS OF ROYAL COURT

SETTING: Off to one side sits Thyme’s beat up desk and hat rack. The remaining section of the stage will over time become a variety of settings, requiring minimum sets and props.

BEFORE LIGHTS COME UP:

(We hear a distant clock tower striking midnight. Bong... Bong... Bong... Bong... Bong.. Bong... Bong... Bong... Bong... Bong... Bong...)

LIGHTS UP:

(A pretty young woman, CINDERELLA, dressed in a ball gown and wearing a harlequin mask and only one shoe appears. She looks around nervously and hurriedly limps across the stage

and out of sight.)

(All is quiet for a moment and then we hear the sound of a BLUESY JAZZ SAXOPHONE wailing its plaintiff cry.)

(JUSTIN THYME enters wearing a trench coat and fedora. He takes off the fedora and hangs it on a beat up hat rack, turns and faces the audience.)

THYME: It was one of those days when all I wanted to do was have a cold beer with a hot blonde. What I didn't want was a case that would cripple my confidence, sap my sense of self importance and deflate my well endowed ego. A case that would make me consider hanging up my roscoe and finding another line of work that didn't include bums, bimbos and bean shooters. But that's exactly what I got when Effie, my overdeveloped secretary with the underdeveloped typing skills oscillated into my office.

MUSIC OUT:

(EFFIE oscillates in wearing high heels, a short skirt and a low cut sweater. Feel free to underscore Effie's oscillation with drumbeats)

THYME: She perched herself on the edge of my desk. *(Thyme looks back at Effie who perches herself on his desk. Then he looks back to the audience)* I forgot about the beer.

Then she crossed her legs. *(Effie crosses her legs. Thyme looks at her then back to the audience)* I forgot about the blonde. Then, she leaned over. *(Thyme looks back to Effie who leans over. Thyme looks back at audience)* That's when I forgot my social security number, home address and mother's maiden name.

EFFIE: There's someone who wants to see you.

THYME: *(to audience)* She said in a breathy whisper that made grown men glad... they were grown men. I asked her who it was? *(to Effie)* Who is it? *(to audience)* She said he wouldn't say.

EFFIE: He wouldn't say.

THYME: *(to audience)* I asked her what he wanted. *(to Effie)* What does he want? *(to audience)* She said he wouldn't say that either.

EFFIE: He wouldn't say that either.

THYME: *(to audience)* She said he was a prince or something.

EFFIE: I think he's a prince or... something.

THYME: What's make you think that? *(to audience)* I asked..

EFFIE: The uniform.

THYME: *(to audience)* She replied.

EFFIE: And the crown, of course.

THYME: Of course. *(to audience)* I wasn't surprised. When you work my side of the street you run into a lot of princes. Most of them call themselves "Charming." Usually that's the one thing they ain't... charming. *(to Effie)* Send him in cumquat knees. Let's hear what he's got to say.

(Effie oscillates out. A moment later, LACKEY, a large man dressed in fancy uniform enters.)

LACKEY: Presenting his royal highness Prince Alfonse William Robert Hastings Oxford Jonathan Milford Anthony Philip William ... again...

THYME: *(to audience)* Is there a name this guy doesn't have?

LACKEY: Albert Constantine Charming. Prince of Lyman on Twill, Hutchings on Vetch, Twicky on Guss, Ham on Rye and the answer to every woman's prayer.

(PRINCE CHARMING *strides in like he owns the world. He's wearing a uniform right out of "The Student Prince" ... and a crown*)

THYME: *(to audience)* I hadn't seen an entrance like that since the second act of "King Lear... The Musical."

PRINCE: Thank you, Lumpy.

LACKEY: Lackey, your highness.

PRINCE: I gather by the lettering on that shabby door in that shabby hall outside this shabby office, that you are Thyme.

THYME: *(to audience)* At least, the guy could read. More than you can say for most of these inbreds.

PRINCE: I am told that you are very good at finding things.

THYME: You were told right.

PRINCE: Good. I want you to find something.

THYME: Lemme guess. A skirt.

PRINCE: Why would I want you to find a skirt? That makes no sense whatsoever. Do I look like a man who wears a skirt?

THYME: A skirt... A Betty... A thrush... A frail... A broad... A dame..

PRINCE: Oh, by that, I suppose, you mean a young woman.

THYME: You could call her that.

PRINCE: Well, Mr. Thyme, can you do it? Find this "skirt" as you so colorfully refer to her.

THYME. Why don't you tell me the whole story, Prince And don't leave out any of the details....*(to audience)* He did and he didn't.

EXCERPT 2

(Thyme walks out into the audience.)

THYME: *(to audience)* The frail I was looking for had shoulders carved from the finest alabaster, , a smile like a morning sunrise and a body like a brick pagoda. I decided to start with the brick pagoda part. *(to woman in audience)* Hiya Toots. How'd you like to be a princess? *(looks to person sitting next to her)* Oh, she's already a princess. *(moves on to another woman, kneels down to fit the shoe)* You ever dance at Big Eddie's over on the south side. You sure? I never forget a great set of stems. *(moves on to another woman and kneels down to try on the shoe)* What's your name popsicle toes? *(The woman tells him. Thyme repeats the name. It's important that it must be the full name. both first and last as it will be repeated later in the play.)* I once knew a dame named *(repeats full name)*. That was back in Frisco. She broke my heart and then she broke my arm. I was crazy about her.

(Effie oscillates back in)

EFFIE: Hey, boss. I got the low down on Gepetto you wanted.

THYME: Hold on. I'm busy here.

EFFIE: Busy or just tryin' to get busy?

THYME: Okay, okay...*(to woman)* Sorry, honey hips, duty calls. But, if you ever decide you wanna take a trip to the moon on gossamer wings, call me. . I'm in the book... under "trips to the moon on gossamer wings". *(crosses back to stage)*

MUSIC OUT:

THYME: So, what'd you find out, cinnamon knees?

EFFIE: *(reads from file)* Monolo Gepetto... Maker of one of a kind women's shoes and handbags. Says here he makes women's fantasies come true.

THYME: What kind of fantasies?

EFFIE: *(like what else?)* One of a kind shoes and handbags. Here's his address. *(hands Thyme slip of paper)*

THYME: Thanks cumquat nose.

EFFIE: That's what I'm here for. *(starts to oscillate out)*

THYME: Remind me to put a little something extra in your stocking this Christmas.

EFFIE: *(turns back)* You tried that once. Remember? *(exits)*

THYME: I watched Effie undulate out of my office, took a cold shower and headed over to Manolo Gepetto's fantasy factory. When I got there, I ran into a kid who was long on attitude with a nose to match.

(PINOCCHIO enters. He's a tough talking kid with a very long nose)

THYME: Hey, you... Cyrano.

PINOCCHIO: A wise guy. What do you want, wise guy?

THYME: A little information.

PINNOCHIO: Then you come to right place. I got as little as you need.

THYME: I'm looking for Manolo Gepetto. Is he around?

PINOCCHIO: Who wants to know?

THYME: The name's Thyme. Justin Thyme. I work for the F.B.I.

PINOCCHIO: The F.B.I.?

THYME: The Fictional Bureau of Investigation. I handle the toughest, dirtiest cases in English literature.

PINNOCHIO: You mean...?

THYME: That's right. I'm a fictional detective.

PINOCCHIO: A dick.

THYME: You could say that.

PINOCCHIO: I just did.

THYME: So let me rephrase my question. Is Manolo Gepetto around?

PINOCCHIO: Never heard of him.

THYME: That's funny. His name is on the door.

PINOCCHIO: Then how come I ain't laughing?

THYME: One more time from the top. Is this Gepetto character on the premises?

PINOCCHIO: And like I said, I never heard of him.

THYME: You're lying kid. I don't know why you're lying, but you're lying. It's as plain as the nose on your face.

PINOCCHIO: *(the attitude is gone in a flash)* Sure, sure... Okay, so you figured it out. Pin a rose on you.

THYME: *(to audience)* I had no idea what he was talking about.

PINOCCHIO: You think it's easy walking around with a lie detector in the middle of your face? It's a curse, man. How'd you like it if every time you told a lie, your nose grew an inch.

EXCERPT 3

(Thyme crosses the stage as ANNA slinks in, all legs, hips and shoulders and everything in between)

ANNA: Well, well. If it isn't Justin Thyme, fictional dick. How's tricks, Thyme?

(She slowly and sensually circles Thyme)

THYME: Anna Reksic. *(to audience)*. Back when I first knew her everyone called her Hard Hearted Anna.. That was back in Savannah. She was the meanest broad in town. I once spent an evening with Anna sittin' on my knees. Lemme tell ya, it was like walking through Alaska in your BVD's. Never forget the first time I laid my peepers on her. We were down at the beach. I looked over and there was Anna with this great big pan. She was pourin' water on a drowning man. Naturally, I was captivated.

MUSIC OUT:

ANNA: Like I said five minutes ago, Thyme, how's tricks?

THYME: Can't complain. How about you Anna? Or is it Lisa, now?

ANNA: You can call me anything you want.

THYME: In that case I'll call you Velma.

ANNA: It's been a long time, Thyme.

THYME: Miss me?

ANNA: The only time I missed you was when my gun jammed. Speaking of guns, is that a roscoe in your pocket or are you just glad to see me.

THYME: It's a roscoe.

ANNA: You always did know how to smooth talk a girl, Thyme. . So, do what do I owe this visit? *(Thyme holds up the shoe.)* Oh Thyme... You shouldn't have.

THYME: I didn't. Recognize it?

ANNA: Should I?

THYME: You should. You ordered it special.

ANNA: I order a lot of things. You should see my Amazon bill.

THYME: You had this one custom made and another one just like it.

ANNA: I ordered two right shoes? I don't think so.

THYME: Well, not just like it. For the other foot.

ANNA: Thanks for returning it, shamus.

THYME: This one wasn't made for you.

ANNA: What makes you say that?

THYME: It's a petite. That's French for you couldn't wedge this on your foot with a crowbar.

ANNA: Keep sweet talking me Thyme and I might have to give up all my secrets.

THYME: Just produce the girl.

ANNA: What girl?

THYME: The girl who goes with this shoe.

ANNA: If you insist. *(calls out)* Ursulala.

EXCERPT 4

(Cinderella limps in wearing one high heel shoe. She's dressed in a light flowery dress, dark glasses and a large brimmed hat. She speaks in fluttery, southern belle accent with just a hint of Blanche DuBois)

CINDERELLA: Are you mistah Thyme?

THYME: I'm Thyme. And who might you be?

CINDERELLA: I'm the girl you've been looking for.

THYME: All my life or just recently?

CINDERELLA: The one the Prince wants you to find.

THYME: I've had a lot of applicants lately who think they can fill the shoe. What makes you think you can? *(Cinderella perches on Thyme's desk and extends a shapely leg)* Good start.

CINDERELLA: Well, Mr. Thyme? *(Thyme just stares at the outstretched leg)*

THYME: Yeah?

CINDERELLA: The shoe.

THYME: Oh, yeah... The shoe.

(Thyme takes out the shoe, kneels, slips the shoe on)

THYME *(to audience)* If they made gloves for feet, this would have fit like one.

(Cinderella extends the other leg to show that the shoe on her other foot matches)

CINDERELLA: A perfect match.

THYME: You can say the same for the shoes.

CINDERELLA: Now do you believe me, Mr. Thyme?

THYME: The Prince is gonna be happy to see you again.

CINDERELLA: Oh no, Mr. Thyme. You musn't tell him. No, no, no... That's what I came to tell you. You mustn't keep lookin' for me. And you mustn't tell my wicked, wicked stepmother either.

THYME: Wicked, wicked stepmother?

CINDERELLA: Yes, my wicked, wicked stepmother. Lisa Condo.

THYME: Lisa Condo is your stepmother?

CINDERELLA: I'm her eighth husband's seventh daughter. Or her seventh husband's eighth daughter. Oh, fiddly dee, it's also so confusing for a poor little girl like me. If she found out I was talking to you, I shudder to think what she might do.

THYME: *(to audience)* I told her to tell me the whole story. Not to leave out any of the details. *(to Cinderella)* Tell me the whole story and don't leave out any of the details. *(to audience)* She did and she didn't.

EXCERPT 5

(Effie hands him newspaper)

THYME: *(shows paper to Anna)* You know the skirt in this picture?

ANNA: That's her. The girl with no name.

THYME: Only here it says her name is Sarah Bellum.

EFFIE: No surprise. She's got a list of aliases as long as your... "arm."

THYME: What are you talking about?

EFFIE, I just ran a check on her. Besides Katie Cinderella O'Hara and Sarah Bellumshe's also known as Cara Van, Charity Case, Milly Gram, Polly Esther, Rose Bush and Sue Flay. She's wanted in six kingdoms for impersonating a damsel in distress.

THYME: According to this, in one hour she'll be taking on a another handle. Mrs. Prince Charming.

EFFIE: More likely... Princess Charming. That's the one I'd go with.

ANNA: So the great Justin Thyme got scammed by a "girl." How does it feel Thyme?

THYME: *(stunned and humiliated)* I... I don't know what to say.

ANNA: Cripple your confidence, does it? Sap your self importance? Deflate your ego?

THYME: *(to audience)* Anna had nailed it alright. My confidence had plummeted lower than a snake's belly.

ANNE: What do you gotta say for yourself now, shamus?

THYME: *(to audience)* I'd been played for a sucker. Sure, I'd let my guard down before with a dame or two ...or three...or four... or five. But what guy hasn't? It goes with the territory. But never like this.

EFFIE: Don't let it get to you boss.

THYME: (*getting dramatic*) I can't help it. I trusted her. For the first time in my life I trusted a dame. And look what it got me. A kick in the teeth.

EFFIE: You'll bounce back. You always do.

THYME: (*anguished*) Not this time. A gumshoe's only armour is his suspicion of everything and everyone. His sense of despair. His mistrust of the entire human race. Take that away and what do you got left?

EFFIE: A well adjusted detective?

THYME: Sure, well adjusted... happy... content... and one more thing.

EFFIE: What's that?

THYME: Unemployed.

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