

An excerpt from...

“THE CASE OF THE REALLY BIG DOG OF THE BASKERVILLES”  
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 detective

EFFIE: Thyme’s well built secretary

WELLINGTON: Typical English butler

SIR CHARLES – Well dressed corpse and off stage voice.

PRUDENCE CADBURY – Prim, proper, beautiful.

CHIPS CADBURY – Prudence’s brother – An English twit

DOCTOR FISH – Local doctor and Thyme’s new sidekick

SHEPHERD CADBURY – Stuffy nephew of Sir Charles

FEMALE PATIENT – Very attractive

SETTING:

Baskerville Manor.

Doctor Fish’s Examining Room

Small Hotel Room

Downstage which doubles as a Village Street and an English moor.

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*SOUND: BLUESY SAXOPHONE MUSIC*

LIGHTS UP

*(Thyme enters wearing a trench coat and fedora. He speaks directly to the audience)*

THYME: It began like most of my cases... with a four hundred year old curse. I’d just wrapped up the “The Lincoln Murder Case” – an actor did it - when Effie, my incredibly well put together secretary with the limited typing skills, pulsated in with a letter for me.

*(Effie pulsates in, hands Thyme the letter and pulsates out. Thyme watches her all the way)*

THYME: *(to audience)* The post mark read Baskerville Manor, Hemmershaw on Faversham, Puddingshire... England... Great Britain... United Kingdom. It was from a Sir Charles Baskerville.

*(Lights up on Sir Charles, writing a letter)*

SIR CHARLES: Dear Mr. Thyme. For nearly four hundred years, all the men in my family have died horrible and disgusting deaths. For reasons I will explain when we meet face to face, I believe I am soon to be the next victim of this dreaded curse. As I find the thought of suffering a horrible and disgusting death both horrible and disgusting, I am calling on your services. Please hurry.. Sir Charles Baskerville. P.S. Use the servant’s entrance.

*(Lights down on Sir Charles)*

THYME: *(to audience)* I always was a sucker for a guy terrified by a family curse, so I packed my fedora and saxophone accompaniment and headed for nineteenth century England. Me? I'm 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. It was around midnight when I arrived at Baskerville Manor. Even through the pea soup that passed for fog, I could see the joint made Buckingham Palace look like a Motel Six. I rang the bell.

*(MUSIC: CHIMES PLAYING HAIL BRITANNIA)*

THYME: A tall man in a black suit answered the door

*(Wellington enters)*

WELLINGTON: May I help you?

THYME: *(to audience)* I was to learn much later that his name was Wellington... That he was the butler.

WELLINGTON: I'm Wellington. I'm the butler.

THYME: *(to audience)* The butler... A crime hadn't even been committed and I already had my first suspect. I'm here to see Sir Charles.

WELLINGTON: Sir Charles is not at home.

THYME: He was expecting me. The name's Thyme.

WELLINGTON: Oh, yes, Mr. Thyme. You'll find Sir Charles walking on the moor.

THYME: The moor?

WELLINGTON: That's right, sir. The moor.

THYME: *(to audience)* I had no idea what he was talking about. The only moors I knew were Roger, Mandy and Mary Tyler.

WELLINGTON: It's that way sir.

THYME: Kinda odd don't you think?

WELLINGTON: What's that, sir?

THYME: Sir Charles walking around out there at midnight?

WELLINGTON: Go figure.

*(Thyme starts to exit offstage)*

WELLINGTON: Sir.

THYME: Yeah?

WELLINGTON: The moor is that way.

THYME: Oh *(he changes direction)*

*(SOUND: WIND)*

THYME: So this was a moor. Bleak, cold, desolate... It reminded me of a dame I was once crazy about... But that's another story.

*(SOUND: DOG BAYING)*

THYME: As far as I could tell, Sir Charles was nowhere to be found. Maybe he didn't go walking on the moor, after all... Maybe he gave Wellington a phony story and went someplace he didn't want.....

*(Thyme trips and falls, either disappearing into the audience or off stage. After a few moments he crawls back on stage and inspects the thing he tripped over)*

THYME: *(to audience)* I was right. Sir Charles wasn't walking on the moor. He was face down in it. Sir Charles Baskerville was deader than a church social during Mardi Gras when the drinks are cheap, the food is hot and the dames are both.

*(Thyme stands, brushes himself off and crosses back to the Manor)*

THYME: I broke the news to Wellington as gently as I could. *(Wellington enters)* Your boss is dead.

WELLINGTON: *(very stiff upper lip)* I'm so sorry to hear that, sir. Would you like a cup of tea?

THYME: *(to audience)* Wellington didn't seem too broken up by the news... It got me to wonderin'. *(to Wellington)* Wellington, you don't seem too broken up by the news.

WELLINGTON: Oh I am sir... Very broken up.

THYME: A guy hears his boss is lying face down in a swamp... he sheds a tear, throws a chair, even asks what happened? But not you.

WELLINGTON: You forget sir... I'm British.

THYME: Oh, yeah... *(to audience)* But that didn't mean I wasn't going to keep an eye on him.

*(Lights fade on the Manor. Thyme walks downstage)*

THYME: *(to audience)* I still didn't know what croaked the old man. So, the next day I went into town to find the local sawbones.

*(Prudence enters. Thyme tips his hat)*

PRUDENCE: Well, good morrow tall, dark and cruelly handsome.

THYME: *(to audience)* For a British dame she was alright. Hair like strawberry. Peaches and cream complexion. Eyes like blueberries and for lips... two red delicious apples. I couldn't tell if I was fallin' for her or just low on vitamin C. Good morning. I'm looking for Doctor Fish's office.

PRUDENCE: *(flirtatiously)* It's nothing serious, I hope.

THYME: It's not for me.

PRUDENCE: So glad to hear that. But, I'm afraid I can't be of much help. I've just moved here myself from Worcestshire on Salisbury... Mister...?

THYME: Thyme... Justin Thyme

PRUDENCE: It's nice to meet you Mr. Thyme.

THYME: Likewise... Miss...?

PRUDENCE: Cadbury...

THYME: Miss Cadbury.

PRUDENCE: But, you can call me what my friends calls me.

THYME: And what's that?

PRUDENCE: Miss Cadbury.

THYME: *(to audience)* I was thinking of a lot of others thing I'd like to call her when...

*(Chips enter carrying a butterfly net)*

CHIPS: Oh there you are Prudence.

THYME: *(to audience)* Some guy with a butterfly net derailed my train of thought.

CHIPS: Isn't this the most magnificent Dryadula phaetusa you've ever seen?

*(Holds up a butterfly)*

PRUDENCE: Chips... This is Mr. Thyme... Mr. Thyme, this is my... *(hesitates)*

CHIPS: Brother

PRUDENCE: Yes... my brother... Chips Cadbury.

THYME: Nice to meet you.

CHIPS: You wouldn't happen to be a naturalist, would you Mr. Thyme?

THYME: No... I prefer to keep my clothes on in public.

CHIPS: Oh no... A naturalist... A collector of the genus Hamadryas.

PRUDENCE: My brother collects and studies butterflies.

THYME: *(to audience)* That explained the net... And a few other things.

CHIPS: And what do you do, Mr. Thyme?

THYME: I'm a gumshoe... A shamus... a bloodhound...

CHIPS: Excuse me.

THYME: *(to audience)* I could see he had difficulty with the English language... *(to Chips)* I'm a detective.

PRUDENCE: A detective. How absolutely thrilling. Isn't that thrilling Chips? Mr. Thyme is a detective.

CHIPS: *(not thrilled)* Yes... Thrilling.

PRUDENCE: And may I ask what you're detecting, Mr. Thyme?

THYME: *(to audience)* At the moment I was detecting a smile that promised nights of unbridled passion followed by days of unremitting recrimination. It was a cocktail I found irresistible.

(The Play continues...)

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