

“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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(Before the lights come up we hear the sound of a BLUESY SAXOPHONE to set the mood. After a few moments, the LIGHTS COME UP on STAGEHAND, dressed in black, who stands unobtrusively behind the PROP TABLE. We discover Justin Thyme with his feet propped up on his desk.)

THYME: It ended like most of my cases... with a stake through a vampire's heart. But it began when Effie, my over developed secretary with the under developed typing skills, pulsated into my office. *(Drumbeats accompany Effie's entrance)*

EFFIE: Ya gotta lettah.

THYME: *(to audience)* She said. *(to Effie)* Why don'tcha read it to me apple hips?

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

THYME: *(to audience)* She explained. She was right about that. On the day she undulated into my office for her job interview, her qualifications were so obvious I only asked her one question. When can you start?. *(to Effie)* Hand me the letter, cumquat cheeks. *(Effie hands him the letter)* *(to audience)* She did... She's good that way. *(to Effie)* Thanks, apricot cheeks.

EFFIE: Whatever. 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 did what I always do... Slipped on my trench coat. *(puts it on)* Grabbed my fedora *(takes it from the hat rack)* Cued my saxophone accompaniment... *(Nods... bluesy saxophone begins to play)* And caught the first train out of town.

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: Van Helsing's directions were very clear. *(takes out a piece of paper and reads)* You leave the Transylvania Station about a quarter to four. You read a magazine...*(The Stagehand hands Thyme a magazine.)*.. and you're in

Krysetstamor. I recommend breakfast in the diner. *(The Stagehand hands Thyme a dish of ham and eggs.)* Nothing could be finer, than to have your ham and eggs in Asia Minor.

(Thyme stands. The Stagehand removes the chair and the props.)

THYME: When I reached Transylvania, I 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 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: *(waves Thyme off)* 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 Stage hand 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
FOLLOWED BY 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.
(to audience) 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.

DRACULA: Allow me to introduce Mandi, Candi, Sandi, Randi and... Martha. Say hello to Mister Thyme, girls.

GIRLS: *(monotonally)* Hello, Mr. Thyme.

THYME: Say, Count... You got a phone around here in case my office wants to reach me.

DRACULA: Of course.

THYME: What's the number?

DRACULA: Girls.

GIRLS: Transylvania six five thousand.

(ORGAN RIM SHOT)

DRACULA: Miss Molly, if you will come with me, I will show you to your room.

(Dracula and Molly exit)

THYME: While Molly went off with the Count, I followed Martha and the Vandellas down a dark, dank, dingy, damp, decaying, decrepit, dreary, dismal and depressing corridor. *(friendly)* Nice place you got here.

MARTHA: *(deep, monotonal, breathy voice, dripping with sexual innuendo)* We like it. I'm sure you will too. If you know what I mean.

THYME: Sure, toots, I know exactly what you mean... *(to audience)* I had no idea what she meant, but I wasn't going to let her know that. Just then something caught my eye. In the light of a burning torch I noticed the red marks on the necks of each of my escorts. Each mark had two little puncture wounds. Like a perforated hickey.

(The Stagehand slides in a door)

MARTHA: This is your room, Mr. Thyme.

(She Opens the door. Thyme steps through it)

THYME: It was a cozy little cell furnished with a chair, a desk, a candle and a... Hey, what's with the coffin?

MARTHA: Think of it as a... theme room.

THYME: Yeah? What's the theme? A quick death?

MARTHA: Oh no, Mr. Thyme... Not quick.

(Martha quickly closes and locks the door from the outside)

MARTHA: Not quick at all.

(The "Girls" exit)

THYME: Hey, Morticia... What's the big idea? Open up... Open up. *(to audience)* I was locked in. Trapped like a rat in a... *(searches for the word)*...Well, a rat in something. *(Thyme bangs on the door)* Open this door. Come on... Open this...

MOLLY: *(echoing voice)* Oh, Count Dracula... You mustn't.

THYME: *(looking around)* It was Molly's voice echoing down to me from somewhere in the castle. *(calling out)* Twinkle tongue... Are you alright?

(Lights up on Molly and Dracula. He's holding her in his arms. She is trying to fight him off)

MOLLY: Please, Count, I'm not that kind of girl.

THYME: Sugar calves... Talk to me.

MOLLY: Please... Count... You don't understand.

THYME: Dracula... Get your lily white hands off Molly's lily white...

MOLLY: You see... I'm a virgin.

THYME: *(Turns to audience after a long pause)* Now, that was a late breaking bulletin.

MOLLY: No, Count... No count. *(Dracula bites her on the neck. She begins to swoon)* Oh, Count.. Oh Count... *(really turned on)* Ohhhhh ... Wow... Count.

(Molly faints in Dracula's arms. He looks up at the audience)

DRACULA: Good golly, Miss Molly.

BLACKOUT:

(LIGHTS BACK UP ON THYME STEPPING THROUGH THE DOOR)

THYME: *(to audience)* It took me three days to pick the lock. All I had to work with was a shoelace, a collar button and a slow laxative. When I finally got out, the castle was deserted. I looked everywhere for Molly but she was gone. Disappeared into the night like... like... Well, like an analogy for something disappearing into the night. Without Molly I hit a dead end and rock bottom all at the same time. So, I did what any self respecting gumshoe does when a dame takes a powder on him. I got drunk. *(sounding drunk)* I'll fight any man in the joint.

(The Stagehand crosses to Thyme and punches him in the nose. Thyme drops like

a rock. The Stagehand smiles and returns to the prop table, gets a chair and slides it over to Thyme. Thyme pulls himself up and collapses into the chair.)

THYME: I woke up a week later in intensive care. The only thing I could hear was that little voice in the back of my head.

(Thyme's Little Voice enters. He's dressed just like Thyme)

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: What're you doin' Thyme? Layin' around here feelin' sorry for yourself. I'm ashamed to call myself that little voice in the back of your head.

THYME: *(to audience)* Did I mention it was an annoying little voice?

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: Some guy stole your dame and you're sittin' around watching reruns of Oprah. You make me sick.

THYME: That little voice was right. I was a detective, a gumshoe, a shamus, a bird dog, a bloodhound... a dick.

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: You can say that again.

(Thyme stands up as Nurse Shapely enters)

NURSE: Oh no Mr. Thyme... You can't get out of bed. You're not well healed.

THYME: No time to worry about my 401K now. There's a dame out there I gotta find. She's sweet, innocent, built like a brick pagoda and she needs my help.

NURSE: Oh, that's so romantic. Why can't I ever meet a man like you? Someone loyal and dependable and caring. *(she exits)*

THYME: *(to audience)* I got Nurse Shapely's number just in case things didn't work out with Molly. Then I disconnected the I.V., unhooked the traction pulleys, removed the body cast and headed for the office.

(Thyme crosses the to his office as Effie pulsates in.)

EFFIE: You're back.

THYME: What about my back?

EFFIE: I mean you're here... Returned. Back in the office.

THYME: *(to audience)* Effie was sharp. She noticed things. She was good that way. *(to Effie)* Effie, my sweet, get me everything you can on a guy named... Dracula.

(OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING)

THYME: Count Dracula.

(OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING)

THYME: Last known address 13 Abomination Lane... Transylvania

(OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING)

(Effie pulsates out and immediately pulsates back in carrying a file. Drumbeats take her out and bring her back in)

THYME: A few hours later Effie oscillated in with the info. Anything interesting tangelo knees?

EFFIE: Other than that this Count guy was born in the sixteenth century and he's a vampire... Nothin' out of the ordinary.

THYME: Thanks grapefruit hips. *(watches Effie oscillate out)* I watched her oscillate out of my office, returned my eyeballs to the general vicinity of my face and started to thumb through the file ... Killed ten thousand people before he was twenty... yadada... yadada... Slaughtered another five thousand... blah.... blah... blah... Bitten by a vampire bat... yeah, yeah, yeah... Lives only on the blood of virgins. So on and so on... Can only be killed with a wooden stake through the heart. The one thing the file didn't tell me was where I could find him. I tossed the file onto my desk. *(A piece of paper flutters to the floor)* That's when a small piece of paper fluttered to the floor. I bent down and picked it up. *(bends down and picks it up)* It said Dracula...

(OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING)

THYME: *(annoyed)* The Count... had recently been seen in London. After reducing the virgin population to zero, he moved on to Paris where he found the pickings slim and then to Los Angeles where he almost starved to death. The trail had run cold again. I was at a dead end. I didn't have a clue.

(Thyme's Little Voice enters)

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: Hey, detective boy... Ask yourself some questions.

THYME: What questions?

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: Like where would you go if you were... Count Dracula?

(OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING)

THYME: San Francisco?

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: No.

THYME: Tokyo?

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: No.

THYME: Rome?

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: No... Try... where is there no place... like...?

THYME: No place like... No place like... No place...

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: *(annoyed)* How about... home?

THYME: I almost had it.

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: How about... home?

THYME: The Count would go someplace where he felt safe. Where he knew the surroundings.... That could only mean one place...

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: Yeah? Yeah?

THYME: I was so close and yet so far.

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: Why do I bother? He's headed for Transylvania you putz.

THYME: I've got it... He must be headed for Transylvania.

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: Why didn't I think of that?

(Thyme's Little Voice exits. The Stagehand slides in a chair.)

SOUND: RAILROAD TRAIN

(Thyme sits down. The Stagehand does the window frame and flashlight bit to indicate a moving train)

THYME: It was midnight when the train finally got in. But, this bein' Transylvania, the train always arrived at midnight.

(Thyme stands. The Stagehand removes the chair and window.)

THYME: I decided to drop in at The Mausoleum, for old time's sake. I took a shortcut through the cemetery. The place was dead. And the cemetery wasn't exactly rocking, either. Nothing had changed. The joint was as dark, dank, dingy, damp, decaying, decrepit, dreary, dismal and depressing as ever. And, everything about it reminded me of her. Even the cigarette butts in my old ashtray. Round and firm and fully packed... Just like Molly.

(Igor enters)

IGOR: Long time, no see, Thyme.

THYME: Igor looked the same as he always did. Butt ugly.

IGOR: You ain't exactly George Clooney yourself. Bloody Mary?

THYME: Make it a decaf vanilla latte. Heavy on the decaf.

IGOR: You're kidding.

THYME: I may joke but I never kid. I'm off the sauce for good, Igor.

IGOR: A dame?

THYME: I didn't know it showed.

IGOR: *(ruefully)* Dames.

THYME: Yeah, dames. There's nothin' like 'em. Nothin' in this world.

IGOR: You're right about that. There is nothing you can name that is anything like a dame.

THYME: There are no drinks like a dame.

IGOR: Tell me about it... And no books like a dame.

THYME: And nothing looks like a dame.

IGOR: Yeah... Face it, nothing acts like a dame.

(Thyme's Little Voice steps in)

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: Hey, Thyme. Knock off the lyricizing. You're embarrassing me. Not to mention setting yourself up for some heavy royalty payments. *(exits)*

IGOR: One decaf vanilla latte, coming right up.

(Vampire Molly, dressed in a skin tight, slinky black dress with pale skin and straight black hair enters)

VAMPIRE MOLLY: Hello, Thyme

THYME: I never saw her slide onto the stool next me. And for good reason. She didn't cast a reflection in the mirror. I found that... odd.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: Buy a girl a drink?

THYME: I recognized her right off. Mandi?

VAMPIRE MOLLY: Wrong

THYME: Sandi?

VAMPIRE MOLLY: Sorry.

THYME: Randi?

VAMPIRE MOLLY: Uh Uh

THYME: Candi.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: Not even close.

THYME: Don't tell me you're Martha.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: Okay, I won't.

THYME: Who are you, then?

VAMPIRE MOLLY: Why don't you just call me... Molly.

THYME: Why would I want to do that?

VAMPIRE MOLLY: Because it's my name.

THYME: Nothing about her was the same. Not the hair I once ran my fingers through. Not the soft complexion I once caressed. Not the blue eyes I once gazed into. Not the lips I had once covered with kisses. And certainly not those...

VAMPIRE MOLLY: I heard you were back.

THYME: News travels fast.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: Transylvania is a small town. About that drink?

THYME: Igor...

IGOR: Yes, master.

THYME: Give the little lady what she wants.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: You still make your Bloody Marys with real blood Igor?

IGOR: Type A, all the way.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: In that case, make mine a double.

IGOR: Coming right up.

THYME: While Igor opened a vein, I turned my attention to Molly.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: What brings you here, Thyme?

THYME: The railroad.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: I mean why are you here?

THYME: To bring you back. Back to the world you belong in. Back where the sun shines. Back where children laugh. Back where...

(Thyme's Little Voice pops in)

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: Thyme, this is the little voice in your head, again. You're making me nauseous. *(pops back out)*

IGOR: *(returning with a drink)* A double bloody mary for the little lady.

(Vampire Molly drinks it in one gulp)

THYME: I watched her chug it down without taking a breath. My heart stood still.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: Go back Thyme. Go back where you came from. Forget about me.

THYME: I'm not leaving without you.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: I have to go. The sun is coming up.

THYME: Going back to...him?

VAMPIRE MOLLY: You mean... Dracula?

(OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING)

THYME: Yeah, I mean... Dracula.

(OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING)

VAMPIRE MOLLY: You could say we're still an item.

THYME: Frankly I don't get it. You were the most exciting, vibrant broad I ever knew. So full of life. So full of fun... And, frankly, he's the whitest white guy I ever saw.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: He's in my blood Thyme. Literally, he's in my blood.

THYME: What kind of hold does he have on you?

VAMPIRE MOLLY: You wouldn't understand.

THYME: Try me.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: I can't explain it... I just know that once you go Drac, you never go back. Goodbye, Thyme.

(Molly exits)

THYME: And with that she was gone. Gone with the wind. Gone with the setting sun... Gone with...

(Thyme's Little Voice pops in carrying a bucket in which he throws up and then

exits)

IGOR: Another latte, Thyme?

THYME: Gimme a Bloody Mary, Igor. And this time make it O positive.

IGOR: The hard stuff. You sure, master?

THYME: Of all the mausoleums in all the towns in all of Transylvania, she had to walk into this one. *(Igor hands him a drink)* Play it Igor.

IGOR: Are you sure, Master?

THYME: If she can stand it, so can I. Play it. Play it again, Igor.

IGOR: Whatever you say, Master.

(The Stagehand rolls in a small organ. Igor sits down and begins to play the Bach Cantata. Thyme downs his drink in one gulp and passes out on the bar.)

BLACKOUT:

(LIGHTS BACK UP ON THYME PASSED OUT ON THE BAR. A ROOSTER CROWS IN THE DISTANCE)

THYME: *(waking up)* The sound of a rooster crowing woke me up.

(SOUND: WOLF HOWLING... ROOSTER CROWING... WOLF DEVOURING ROOSTER.)

THYME: And the sound of a wolf eating that rooster reminded me I was in... Transylvania. .

(OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING)

THYME: I decided it was time to drop in on... Count Dracula.

(OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING).

(SOUND: THUNDER)

(Thyme turns up his collar and crosses the stage. The Stagehand sprays him with water)

THYME: For Transylvania, the weather was unseasonably mild. But, in the dark, dank, dingy, damp, decaying, decrepit, dreary, dismal and depressing Transylvanian country side, I suddenly realized I was lost. *(The Stagehand rolls in a door)* My only refuge was a dark, foreboding castle perched precipitously over jagged rocks being pounded by an angry and merciless sea? It seemed vaguely familiar. But, then again, every castle in Transylvania is foreboding and perched precipitously over jagged rocks being pounded by an angry and merciless sea.

(Thyme crosses to the door and rings the bell.)

(SOUND: WOMAN'S SCREAM)

THYME: When no one answered. I rang the bell again.

(SOUND: WOMAN'S SCREAM)

THYME: I waited. Still no answer. I walked around the castle until I found an open window. *(Stagehand slides in a window frame)* and climbed in. *(Thyme climbs through the window frame.)* The room was filled with coffins as far as the eye could see. It looked like the showroom at Forest Lawn. I made my way down a dark, dank, dingy, damp, decaying, decrepit, dreary, dismal and depressing hallway. Behind every door were rooms filled with more coffins. I pushed open one last door.

(The Stagehand moves the door. Thyme pushes it open and steps through it as the Stagehand slides in a coffin)

THYME: The lid to an elaborately carved casket was slowly opening. *(The coffin lid opens. Dracula sits up)* There he was, dressed immaculately in a perfectly tailored Pierre Cardin tuxedo with matching cape. You had to hand it to the guy. He really knew how to accessorize.

DRACULA: Good evening, Mr. Thyme. We were expecting you.

(Dracula gets out of the coffin, shuts the lid, takes out a car remote control and presses it. The coffin beeps)

THYME: I've come for the girl.

DRACULA: I'm afraid you'll have to be more specific. My castle is filled with ghouls.

THYME: Not a ghoul... A girl.

DRACULA: Sorry... Which girl?

THYME: Let's just call her Molly.

DRACULA: And why is that?

THYME: Because it's her name.

DRACULA: Sorry... Doesn't ring a bell. Perhaps if you could tell me her blood type.

(The Stagehand produces a fake bat on a string and attacks Thyme with it)

THYME: Hey... Back off... Get away from me... Hey... Count... Call off your friend or I'll have to put a bullet through it.

(Dracula waves his cape. The Stagehand drops the bat behind Dracula. A second later Vampire Molly appears from behind Dracula)

VAMPIRE MOLLY: Leave him alone, Thyme.

THYME: *(to audience)* It was Molly... At least I thought it was Molly. But, face it. In the dark, one undead dame looks pretty much like every other undead dame. *(to Vampire Molly)* Back off zombie hips. I'm gonna punch this guy's ticket for good.

DRACULA: I cannot be killed, Mr. Thyme. That is not possible.

THYME: Oh yeah... What about this? *(He produces a wooden stake and mallet)* This stake's got your name on it. See? Right there on the side.

DRACULA: *(reads)* I believe that says Louisville Slugger.

THYME: Oh, yeah *(Turns stake around)* Right here... Count Dracula.

(OMINOUS ORGAN MUSIC STING)

DRACULA: In that case, it is possible.

THYME: I'm going to drive this stake right through your heart, bat boy. *(to audience)* At last, all those hours of watching "This Old House" were going to pay off.

(Vampire Molly steps in front of Dracula)

VAMPIRE MOLLY: I won't let you kill him.

THYME: Get out the way, corpse girl.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: I won't. I love him... I love him. I love him. And where he goes I'll follow.

THYME: *(speaking deliberately)* Just step away from the vampire and nobody gets hurt.

VAMPIRE MOLLY: No... I will follow him... Follow him wherever he may go. There isn't a mountain so wide... A valley so deep... It can keep me away. Away from my love.

(The Stagehand returns with a bunch of fake bats hanging by strings from sticks. The bats attack Thyme)

THYME: *(to audience)* From out of nowhere the room was filled with bats. Ugly, slimy, disgusting, detestable, frightful, ghastly, monstrous, nauseating... and really yucky bats. I tried to fight them off. I was outnumbered.

(Thyme's Little Voice pops in)

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: Thyme...

THYME: Not now. I'm being attacked by bats.

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: I have a suggestion.

THYME: Spill it.

THYME'S LITTLE VOICE: Run like hell!!!

THYME: Good suggestion.

(The Little Voice pops out)

(Thyme runs back and forth across the stage with the Stagehand following him with the fake bats. During this Dracula and Vampire Molly exit)

THYME: I couldn't escape. The bats were everywhere... Ripping my clothes... Tearing at my flesh. Every door I tried was locked. It was like a scene from that Hitchcock movie. You know, the one where Tippi Hedren gets attacked by birds. Only this time the birds were bats and I was Tippi Hedren. *(The Stagehand slides in the door)* Then... There it was... An open door. If I could only get to it...*(Thyme keeps reaching for the door only to have the Stagehand gleefully roll it out of his reach. He does this several times. Finally Thyme fakes left, the Stagehand moves the door to the right. Thyme jumps through it.)* I was in. At last, I was safe.

(Dracula appears)

DRACULA: We meet again, Mr. Thyme.

THYME: Maybe "safe" was overstating it a bit.

DRACULA: *(calling out)* Renfield!!! *(Renfield slithers in)*

RENFIELD: Yes, master?

DRACULA: Renfield, how would you like to have an assistant?

RENFIELD: An assistant, master?

DRACULA: Yes, an assistant. Someone to do whatever you tell him to do. The way you do everything I tell you to do?

RENFIELD: Everything, master?

DRACULA: Yes, everything, Renfield.

RENFIELD: Like sweeping up the bat guano, master?

DRACULA: Yes, Renfield, like sweeping up the bat guano.

RENFIELD: Oh, I'd like that very much Master. What would I have to do?

DRACULA: For starters you could grasp Mr. Thyme's arms and pin them behind his back.

RENFIELD: Oh, I'd like that, master.

(Renfield advances on Thyme. Thyme draws his gun)

THYME: Keep him away from me, Count, or I'll have to plug him.

DRACULA: Unless you're the Lone Ranger and that gun has silver bullets, it will do no harm to Renfield. You see, he is already dead.

(Renfield cackles. Thyme fires two shots at Renfield. They have no effect. Renfield knocks the gun from Thyme's hand and pins his arms behind his back.)

DRACULA: You've become an annoyance, Mr. Thyme. It's time for you to go... bye-bye.

(Dracula advances on Thyme)

THYME: You forget one thing, Count.

DRACULA: And what is that, Mr. Thyme?

THYME: I ain't a virgin.

DRACULA: In your case, Mr. Thyme, I'm willing to make an exception.

THYME: Don't do me no favors.

(Dracula continues to advance on Thyme. As he is about to bite Thyme's neck, Dracula hesitates and pulls away. A small shaft of light, followed by a look of fear, moves across Dracula's face. He stumbles as does Renfield who lets go of Thyme. Thyme locates the source of the light and throws open the drapes flooding the room with light.)

DRACULA: *(cowering)* The light. How can this be?

(Thyme finds the stake and a mallet.)

DRACULA: The sun is not due up for another hour.

THYME: You forgot one thing, Count.

DRACULA: What? What did I forget?

THYME: Daylight savings time. You know... Fall back... Spring forward.

DRACULA: Damn you, Renfield. Why didn't you tell me? What do I pay you for?

RENFIELD: *(fading fast)* You don't.

DRACULA: In that case remind me to de-fund your retirement plan.

(Renfield flips Dracula the bird and stumbles out to die. Thyme moves in on Dracula and raises the wooden stake)

DRACULA: One last request before you nail me to the wall.

THYME: What is it?

DRACULA: Don't nail me to the wall.

THYME: Request denied.

(Thyme drives the stake into Dracula's heart, nailing him to the back wall.)

(Van Helsing enters from where Renfield stumbled out)

VAN HELSING: I've been waiting a long time for someone to do that.

THYME: Who the hell are you?

VAN HELSING: The name's Van Helsing.

THYME: Abraham Van Helsing?

VAN HELSING: Correct. Abraham Van Helsing.

THYME: Doctor Abraham Van Helsing?

VAN HELSING: Yes. Doctor Abraham Van Helsing.

THYME: I thought you were dead.

VAN HELSING: I was.

THYME: I don't get it.

VAN HELSING: While I was one of the living dead, you knew me as... Renfield.

THYME: Renfield?

VAN HELSING: But now that Dracula...

SOUND: OMINOUS ORGAN STING:

VAN HELSING: *(annoyed)* Now that "whatshisname" is dead, I have returned to once again being the handsome and debonair Doctor Alexander Van Helsing that women want to be with and men want to be.

(Molly rushes in. She's returned to her former self)

MOLLY: Oh Thyme. *(She sees Van Helsing. She's impressed)* Well, hello there.

THYME: Molly?

MOLLY: Yes, it's me. I'm alive and I'm free and I'm a virgin once again.

THYME: Two out of three ain't bad.

MOLLY: Oh Thyme, you saved me. How can I ever repay you?

THYME: I'm sure if we put our mind to it, we could come up with something.

MOLLY: I know... I am going to devote my whole life to making you happy. Once we're married, of course.

THYME: *(to audience)* I don't remember mentioning the M word to Molly. As a matter of fact, I don't remember mentioning the M word to any dame.

MOLLY: We'll be so happy in our little cottage with the white picket fence.

THYME: What is it with dames? You save a mug's life, he buys you a beer. Takes you to a ball game. He don't move in and start redecoratin'.

MOLLY: It'll be wonderful. You and me and little Billy and little Patsy and little Jackie and little Sammy and little Joanie and little...

(A phone rings. The Stagehand answers it, then hands to the phone Van Helsing)

VAN HELSING: *(into phone)* Yes, this is Transylvania six five thousand.

(ORGAN RIM SHOT)

VAN HELSING: Yes, of course, I'll tell him.

(Hangs up phone. Stagehand takes it and exits)

THYME: What is it, Van Helsing?

VAN HELSING: Your office Mr. Thyme. It's urgent... Very urgent. Something about a murder in the Rue Morgue.

THYME: I'd better get on it right away.

MOLLY: Oh Thyme... You can't leave me like this. Take me with you.

THYME: I've got a job to do, lemon ears. Where I'm going, you can't follow. What I've got to do, you can't be any part of. I'm no good at being noble but someday you'll understand that.

MOLLY: Someday? Someday? But what about now?

THYME: Now? Now? Here's looking at you kid.

MOLLY: What the hell does that mean?

(Thyme gently pushes her jaw with his fist until she's looking directly at the audience.)

THYME: Now, get outta here before I change my mind.

VAN HELSING: You'd better hurry Mr. Thyme.

MOLLY: *(starts to exit then turns back)* Thyme, what will I do without you?

THYME: You'll do what every other dame I've ever known does.

MOLLY: What's that?

THYME: Suffer.

MOLLY: Oh Thyme, you do care. *(She sighs and exits)*

THYME: So, Professor, how many murders are we talkin' about?

VAN HELSING: None.

THYME: None?

VAN HELSING: None. Zero. Nada. Bupkis.

THYME: But that phone call.

VAN HELSING: Oh, that was just my secretary reminding me I have a breakfast meeting at nine.

THYME: I don't get it... Again.

VAN HELSING: You surprise me Mr. Thyme. For a detective I thought you'd be more perspicacious.

THYME: I would be if I knew what that meant.

VAN HELSING: There were no murders in the Rue Morgue. I was just returning a favor.

THYME: What favor?

VAN HELSING: We are both men of the world, Mr. Thyme. And it was obvious, that while the young lady is quite a delectable morsel, you have, how should I put it, a more expansive culinary palate.

THYME: Okay... Now, could you put in that plain English, Doc?

VAN HELSING: You saved my life and I just saved yours.

(Thyme puts his arm around Van Helsing's shoulder. They begin to exit upstage.)

THYME: You know Doc, this could be the start of a beautiful friendship.

SOUND: BLUESY SAXOPHONE MUSIC

(Thyme and Van Helsing exit. The Stagehand begins to pick up the leftover props and stack them on a table. He looks around to see if there's anything he missed and sees the wooden spike sticking out of Dracula's chest. He pulls the spike out, places it with the other props and begins to sweep up. A moment later Dracula returns to life. He looks around as Molly runs in)

MOLLY: Thyme... Oh Thyme... You forgot.... *(She sees Dracula)* Oh, it's...you. *(Dracula beckons her to him. Unable to resist, Molly glides toward Dracula)* Again? *(Dracula takes her in his arms)* Oh, Count. *(He nuzzles her neck)* Please... You musn't. *(He bites her neck. Nothing happens. Puzzled, he looks up and then bites it again. Again, nothing happens. Dracula looks and then dives in for one last bite. Nothing happens. Dracula can't figure out what's wrong. He looks crushed)*

MOLLY: Oh don't worry about it, Drackie. It happens to every vampire. You've just been under a lot of pressure. A little time off and you'll be sucking blood with the best of them. *(Dracula doesn't look comforted)* In the meantime, we are going to be so happy together. I just know it. Just you and me and little Vladimir and little Raluca and little Anatolie and little Dimitry and little Draguta and little Irina and little Silvia...

(She exits reciting children's names. Dracula throws his arms up in disbelief. The Stagehand starts to wheel off the table with the props. Dracula stops him and picks up the wooden spike. He looks at it for a moment then hands it to the Stagehand.)

DRACULA: Would you mind?

(The Stagehand shrugs and plunges the wooden spike into Dracula's chest.)

DRACULA: Thank you.

(Dracula collapses. The Stagehand watches him fall then shakes his head. He's not cleaning this mess up. Instead, he signals off stage. Martha and "The Girls" enter, cross to Dracula, lift him up and put him in the coffin. Martha clicks her remote. The coffin beeps. The "Girls" exchange looks, then seductively advance on The Stagehand. Two of "The Girls" drape themselves over him while Martha and the others lead a smiling Stagehand off.

LIGHTS DOWN

THE END