"THE CASE OF THE TALE TOLD BY AN IDIOT"
A Justin Thyme Mystery
By Bruce Kane

Copyright: Bruce Kane Productions 2012
All Rights Reserved
22448 Bessemer St.
Woodland Hills, CA 91367
PH: 818-999-5639
E-mail: bkane1@socal.rr.com

"The Case of The Tale Told By An Idiot, A Justin Thyme Mystery" is protected by copyright law and may not be performed without written permission from Bruce Kane Productions. To obtain permission go to www.kaneprod.com/contact.htm.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS All producers of "The Case of The Tale Told By An Idiot, A Justin Thyme Mystery" must give credit to Bruce Kane as sole Author of the Play in all programs distributed in connection with performance of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for any purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or production thereof, including posters, souvenir books, flyers, books and playbills. Bruce Kane must also appear immediately following the title of the Play and must appear in size of type not less then fifty percent of the size of type used for the title. The Author’s name must be equal to or larger than the Director's, but never smaller than that of the Director. The above billing must appear as follows: "The Case of The Tale Told By An Idiot, A Justin Thyme Mystery" by Bruce Kane

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

CHARACTER LIST:
JUSTIN THYME – Bogart like private eye
EFFIE – Thyme’s voluptuous secretary
MALCOM – Speaks in strong Scottish brogue
HECATE – Innkeeper at the Inn Of The Three Witches – Speaks in a cockney accent
LADY MACBETH – Wife of the king… Old flame of Thyme’s – Sexy and very ambitious
MACBETH – King of Scotland –Speaks like he’s watched too many Richard Burton movies
MACDUFF – MacBeth’s right hand man – Rough around the edges
THREE WITCHES – The headliners at the Inn Of The Three Witches
CASTLE GUARD
SCOTTISH GUARD (can be played by actor who plays Castle Guard)

SETTING:
The set can be as elaborate as castle walls and all the rooms suggested in the play or it can be as simple as chairs, tables, a door and some greenery to suggest the locations.
SOUND: BLUESY SAXOPHONE MUSIC

LIGHTS UP:

(Justin Thyme, dressed in a trenchcoat and fedora, enters and speaks directly to the audience)

THYME: It began like most of my cases – with a guy in a plaid mini-skirt. I’d just wrapped up “The Garden Of Eden Murder Case” – the brother did it – when Effie, my overdeveloped secretary with the underdeveloped typing skills, undulated in to my office.

(Effie undulates in to the sound of drumbeats to emphasize her undulations)

THYME: She told me I had a visitor.

EFFIE: Ya’ gotta visitah.

THYME: I told her to show him in. (to Effie) Show him in. (to audience) She said “sure.”

EFFIE: Sure. (looks off stage and yells) Come on in.

(A Scotsman in a kilt enters. This is Malcom.)

THYME: Thanks, sugar hips.

EFFIE: Sure… Anytime… If you want me just whistle. You know how to whistle, don’t ya? You just put your lips together and…

THYME: And what?

EFFIE: (annoyed) Do I have think of everything?

(Effie undulates off to the sound of drumbeats)

MALCOM: Charming lassie.

THYME: Yeah… If you like blondes with long legs and short memories. (to audience) Fortunately, I did. (to audience) My visitor told me his name was Malcom.

MALCOM: Me name is Malcom.

THYME: (to audience) I told him to have a seat. (to Malcom) Have a seat. (Malcom sits) He sat down, modestly crossed his legs at the ankles, straightened his hem and told me he needed my help.

(Malcom sits. Thyme remains standing)

MALCOM: I need your help.
THYME: *(to audience)* I asked what I could do for him. *(to Malcom)* What can I do for you?

MALCOM: I want you to catch a murderer.

THYME: Murder, huh? Who got whacked?

MALCOM: Me father.

THYME: What makes you think you’re old man’s been croaked?

MALCOM: The seven stab wounds in his back.

THYME: *(to audience)* I immediately ruled out suicide. Malcom said that back home his father had been a big deal.

MALCOM: Back home my father was a big deal.

THYME: How big?

MALCOM: The biggest. He was the king.

THYME: That’s big. Who do you think zotzed your old man?

MALCOM: The man who killed my father is called… *(with great portent… you can even underscore with an ominous organ chord here)*… MacBeth.

THYME: *(to audience)* It was a story I’d heard a thousand times before. A king gets whacked. The son takes the rap and the killer takes everything else. . Of course, another story I’d heard a thousand times was the son ices the old man, splits for parts unknown and hangs the frame on somebody else. Either way it was my job to get the bottom of it. Me? I’m Justin Thyme. I work for the F.B.I. The Fictional Bureau of Investigation. I handle the toughest, dirtiest case in English literature. That’s right… I’m a fictional detective. The King of Scotland had his ticket punched and it was up to me to find out who his travel agent was. Malcom and I agreed to split up. *(to Malcom)* I’ll take the high road.

MALCOM: I’ll take the low road. *(exits)*

THYME: *(to audience)* I figured I’d get to get to Scotland before him.

*(SOUND: THUNDER, HOWLING WIND AND POURING RAIN)*

THYME: *(turns up his collar; to audience)* Cold, wet and miserable, I stumbled into The Inn Of The Three Witches. *(Thyme turns and walks into the Inn Of The Three Witches)* Ramshackle, tumble down, off the beaten path in a secluded part of a remote forest, miles from nowhere, the joint wasn’t exactly a Starbucks. But then again, there wasn’t one on every corner, either. I was shaking off the rain as best as I could when a snaggled tooth crone with rotting flesh dropped into the chair next to me.
(Hecate enters and sits down next to Thyme)

HECATE: Well, 'ello there cold, wet and miserable. What'll it be?

THYME: Whaddya got?

HECATE: We got a nice fenny snake.

THYME: How do you cook that?

HECATE: In the cauldron boil and bake.

THYME: What else ya got?

HECATE: There’s eye of newt, toe of frog, wool of bat, tongue of dog, Adder's fork, blind-worm's sting, and, the ‘ouse special… lizard’s leg. We serve that with a mixed green salad, of course.

THYME: Of course.

HECATE: And for the more developed palate there’s Nose of Turk and Tartar’s lips.

THYME: (to audience) For some reason, my appetite had taken a powder. (to Hecate) I’ll just settle for directions.

HECATE: Suit yourself. But you’re passin’ up a real mouth waterin’ treat, y’are.

THYME: I’m looking for Dunsinane Castle.

HECATE: Goin’ to see the MacBeths, are ya?"

THYME: Just the directions, toots.

HECATE: He was here himself, MacBeth was. Sat right where you’re sittin’. Old high and almighty. Course, we knew he was comin’ so we put on our best rags, we did. Gave ‘im a real show. ‘Ad the fire burnin’ and the cauldron bubblin’. We was a sight alright. Prophsyin’… Tellin’ ‘im ‘ow ‘he was gonna be the big cheese and all. ‘E loved it, ‘e did. You shoulda seen him. Rode outta here all puffed up like a Christmas goose, ‘e was.

THYME: About those directions.

HECATE: Sure you don’t want to hang around till closin’ time? I get off at midnight, if you know what I mean.

THYME: (to audience) I knew exactly what she meant. (Thyme walks downstage. The lights go down of the Inn Of The Three Witches) That’s why I was out the door faster than you can say “acid reflux.”

(SOUND: THUNDER, HOWLING WIND AND POURING RAIN)
(Thyme turns his collar up)

THYME: Cold, wet and miserable I stumbled out of the darkness and onto Dunsinane Castle.

CASTLE GUARD: (O.S.) Who goes there?

THYME: Justin Thyme, Fictional Detective.

(The Castle Guard enters)

THYME: I’m here to see the king. Official business.

GUARD: Follow me.

THYME: (O.S.) The guard led me to a small ante-room… just off a waiting room… next to the dining room… behind a reception room… that opened on to a sitting room… that overlooked a garden room… that led into the throne room.

(Under the above we hear the sounds of footsteps, doors opening… doors closing… more footsteps… more doors, etc., etc., etc. until Thyme enters from the opposite side of the stage, slightly winded)

THYME: She was there… Waiting for me.

(Lady MacBeth enters looking very slinky and very sexy)

LADY MACBETH: I’ve been waiting for you.

THYME: (surprised) Nola? Nola MacDougal?

LADY MACBETH: Funny, no one’s called me that in a long time.

THYME: (to audience) Back when I knew her, everyone called her Nola. … She was a showgirl. With orange feathers in her hair and a… dress cut down to… well… you know where. She would salsa and do the cha-cha. That was at the Copa. The Copa de Ora. Back then it was the hottest spot north of Sonora. In those days Nola was beautiful, smart, ambitious, dangerous, scheming, conniving, irresistible, calculating, cunning, deceitful and selfish. In short she was everything I ever wanted in a woman. The years had been kind to Nola, although I had to admit… she’d changed. (to Lady MacBeth) You haven’t changed a bit, Nola.

LADY MACBETH: You always were full of crap, Thyme. But keep it up.

THYME: (to audience) If anything, she’d added a few more erogenous zones. Mmmmmm….I liked that line. I decided to go with it. (to Lady MacBeth) If anything, tangerine toes, you’ve added a few more erogenous zones.

LADY MACBETH: You always knew the right thing to say, didn’t you, Thyme?
THYME: *(to audience)* It worked. I’d have to remember it.

LADY MACBETH: Still mad at me, Thyme?

THYME: Why? Because you dumped me without saying a word?

LADY MACBETH: Maybe.

THYME: Because you slipped out of my life one night and disappeared without so much as leavin’ me a post-it note.

LADY MACBETH: Perhaps.

THYME: Because you ripped out my heart and stomped on it with those three inch sling back, open toed, stiletto heels you always wore with black seamed stockings and a red dress that showed off more curves than the New York Yankees pitching staff?

LADY MACBETH: I’m glad to see you’re a man who doesn’t hold a grudge.

THYME: Just one question.

LADY MACBETH: Sure.

THYME: Why? Give me one good reason.

LADY MACBETH: He could offer me wealth. He could offer me power. He could offer me…

THYME: I said just one.

LADY MACBETH: What could you offer me, Thyme? A fictional detective’s pay and an under funded retirement plan? Admit it, Thyme. I had no future with you. I was just Msomeone to feed your insatiable passion. Bank the fires of your raging lust. Ride your throbbing, thrusting…

THYME: *(to audience)* She was killing me softly with her words. I had to shut her up and I knew just how to do it.

*(Thyme grabs her up in his arms and kisses her)*

LADY MACBETH: Thyme… Please… No…Please… Please… *(succumbing in a big way)* Oh, please.

*(BLACKOUT then LIGHTS BACK UP on Thyme and Lady MacBeth sitting or lying side by side. She’s smoking a cigarette)*

LADY MACBETH: *(Sighs)* I can’t remember the last time two minutes flew by so quickly. So, tell me Thyme… What are you doing here? And don’t tell me you came all this way just for a little highland “fling.”
THYME: I'm investigating a death.

LADY MACBETH: Who died?

THYME: The King.

LADY MACBETH: The king? Don't be ridiculous. The king is in perfect health.

THYME: How come you so much about the King of Scotland?

LADY MACBETH: Well, for one thing, my name's not Nola MacDougal anymore. It's MacBeth... Lady MacBeth.

THYME: Then that means the king is...

LADY MACBETH: My husband.

THYME: (to audience) Husband! That word had a way of focusing a man's attention.

LADY MACBETH: I thought you knew.

THYME: (to audience) I hadn't even started my investigation and the case had already gotten complicated. According to the code of the fictional detective you don't fool around with the wife of your prime suspect. Of course, I didn't know she was the wife of my prime suspect at the time I took her to ecstasyville, so I was off the hook technically wise. Somehow, I couldn't imagine Nola mixed up in murder. Extortion, blackmail, bookmaking, mail fraud, loan sharking... Sure... But murder? Like I said, it was getting complicated.

LADY MACBETH: (impatiently) Are you done?

THYME: For now. (to audience) Nola told me I was wasting my time.

LADY MACBETH: You're wasting your time, Thyme.

THYME: (to audience) She said they found the men who killed King Duncan.

LADY MACBETH: We found the men who killed King Duncan.

THYME: (to audience) She said their hands were drenched in blood.

LADY MACBETH: Their hands were...

THYME: I think I covered that already. I'd like to talk them. These killers of yours.

LADY MACBETH: Too late. You know those gargoyles hanging on the front gate when you came in?

THYME: Yeah.
LADY MACBETH: Those aren’t gargoyles.

THYME: Why the rush to judgment, blueberry cheeks?

LADY MACBETH: To assure the peasants that justice had been served. That society was back in balance once again. That they could return to their miserable lives and that we could return to making them miserable.

THYME: Not that I don’t believe every word you’re telling me persimmon knees... *(to audience)* Yeah... Right... Nola MacDougal couldn’t draw a straight line with a ruler. *(to Lady MacBeth)* But, I’ll just hang around and ask a few questions... just for appearances sake. You understand, don’t you, cumquat nose?

LADY MACBETH: Sure, Thyme... I understand.

THYME: Just for the record. Where were you when the old king got whacked?

LADY MACBETH: In my room... And I’ve got seven witnesses to prove it.

THYME: *(to audience)* Knowing Nola MacDougal, I was surprised it was only seven. One more thing paprika knees... When you talk to your husband... don’t say anything about what went on here. I wouldn’t want him to get the right idea.

LADY MACBETH: No problem...*(starts to exit and turns back)* I’ve forgotten it already. *(she exits)*

THYME: *(disappointed)* Oh. *(to audience)* Before I could figure out whodunit, I had to figure out whocouldadunit. So I started asking questions. A lot of questions. *(MacDuff enters)* Excuse me... Mind if I ask you a lot of questions?

MACDUFF: Depends on who’s doin’ the askin’?

THYME: The name’s Thyme.

MACDUFF: Oh sure, the fictional detective.

THYME: Word travels fast.

MACDUFF: Lady MacBeth said you’d be nosin’ around.

THYME: What else did she say?

MACDUFF: That you were a complete stranger. That she’d never seen you before and that I shouldn’t listen to ugly rumors.

THYME: Just for the record, what’s your name?

MACDUFF: MacDuff...

THYME: You work for MacBeth... MacDuff?
MACDUFF: Yeah… I work for MacBeth… You might say I’m his right hand.

THYME: Yeah… And who would you say is his left hand?

MACDUFF: Wouldn’t know.

THYME: *(to audience)* You come across this a lot in my business. The right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing. *(to MacDuff)* You wouldn’t happen to know where MacBeth was when the old king got dead.

MACDUFF: You don’t think MacBeth had anything to do with the king’s death.

THYME: I’ll ask the questions.

MACDUFF: You’re barking up the wrong tree, mister. MacBeth had no reason to kill Duncan.

THYME: What makes you think so? He got to be king, didn’t he?

MACDUFF: MacBeth never wanted to be king. He was perfectly happy being Thane of Cawdor. Stealing from the peasants, suppressing the serfs… Having sex with the scullery maids…. Then the witches told him he would be thane of Glammis and everything changed.

THYME: Thane of Glammis?

MACDUFF: Yeah… It’s the castle on the Frammis.

THYME: MacBeth is thane of Glammis on the Frammis?

MACDUFF: No. I told ya… MacBeth is thane of Cawdor.

THYME: If MacBeth is thane of Cawdor, then who’s thane of Glamis on the Frammis?

MACDUFF: Tammis.

THYME: Tammis?

MACDUFF: Yeah… Tammis of Glamis on the Frammis.

THYME: *(to audience)* It all sounded like double talk to me. But there was no way I was gonna let MacDuff know that. I continued to play dumb. It wasn’t hard to do. *(to MacDuff)* Do you know where Lady MacBeth was when the old king turned up face down?

MACDUFF: Lady MacBeth had nothin’ to do with the old guy’s death. Nothin’. You do anything to upset the lady and you’ll have me to answer to. You got that Thyme?

THYME: You like Lady MacBeth, don’t you?
MACDUFF: Yeah... Sure... What's not to like? She's kind, gentle, sweet and loving. You don't know her like I do Thyme. *(suspiciously)* You don't know her like I do, do ya Thyme?

THYME: Apparently not. You'd do anything for Lady MacBeth, wouldn't you?

MACDUFF: You bet your bodkin I would.

THYME: Like kill for her?

MACDUFF: Only if she asked me... Hey, what are you getting' at Thyme?

THYME: Nothing. One more question.

MACDUFF: I thought you said the last question was your last question.

THYME: Why, you keepin' score? Where were you when Duncan got whacked?

MACDUFF: In my room... And I got seven witnesses that can prove it. We done here?

THYME: Sure... *(MacDuff starts to leave)* One more thing. *(MacDuff stops)* How did MacBeth react to the old king's kickin' the bucket?

MACDUFF: MacBeth was really broken up by it. He loved Duncan like a father. He hasn't been the same fun lovin', peasant taxing, wife stealing guy he used to be.

THYME: What do you mean he's not the same?

MACDUFF: Spends most every day and night wandering the halls... Talking to himself.

THYME: *(to audience)* I thanked MacDuff for his help. *(to MacDuff)* Thanks for your help.. *(to audience)* He said he was happy to help.

*(MacDuff mumbles something in a completely unintelligible Scottish brogue, gives Thyme a nasty hand gesture and exits. A moment later MacBeth enters. He speaks the following lines as though quoting a Shakespearean monologue)*

MACBETH:
I am always chasing rainbows, watching clouds drifting by.

THYME: *(to audience)* Suddenly there he was... Big Mac himself. Although we hadn't been formally introduced I knew it was the king. When you've been a detective as long as I have, you learn to make these deductions. The fact he was wearing a crown didn't hurt, either.

MACBETH: My schemes are like all my dreams. Ending in the...

THYME: Your majesty...

MACBETH: *(holds up a spoon he's been carrying)* Is this a dagger which I see before me? The handle toward my hand?
THYME: No. It’s a soup spoon.

MACBETH: Oh… Really? I could’ve sworn it was a dagger.

THYME: I wonder if I could ask you a few questions?

MACBETH: And who might you be?

THYME: The name’s Thyme… Justin Thyme.

MACBETH: The fictional detective, My wife mentioned you.

THYME: (suspiciously) Oh yeah? What did she say?

MACBETH: That you were a complete stranger. That she’d never seen you before and that I shouldn’t listen to ugly rumors.

THYME: Just for the record, where were you when the old king bought the farm?

MACBETH: The farm? You must have me confused with Old MacDonald.

THYME: No… No… Where were you when the old king was iced? Shivved? Whacked?

MACBETH: Please sir, speak twelfth century Scottish.

THYME: Where were you when King Duncan was killed?

MACBETH: I was in my room… And I’ve got seven witnesses to prove it.

THYME: (to audience) I was getting nowhere fast. So far everybody had an alibi. It was the same alibi, but it was an alibi.

MACBETH: (exiting) Some fellows look and find the sunshine.

(SOUNDS OF WIND, THUNDER AND RAIN)

MACBETH: I always look and find the rain… Some fellows make a killing sometime…(exits)

THYME: (to audience) Maybe the old king’s son had bumped him off, after all. But something MacDuff said kept rattling around in my brain like I had a screw loose. I decided to check out my hunch.

(Thyme turns up his collar)

THYME: (to audience) Wet, cold and miserable I stumbled back into the Inn Of Three Witches. (Thyme enters the Inn)

HECATE: (entering) Well, look who’s here. Couldn’t stay away from ole Hecate could ya, duckie?
THYME: What can I say liver face, you’re sore eyes are a sight.

HECATE: ‘Ow you do go on.

THYME: The last time I was here you told me MacBeth had been sitting right where I was sitting. That you gave him a real show. That you knew he was coming.

HECATE: That’s right.

THYME: How did you know?

HECATE: She told us.

THYME: She? Who?

HECATE: Never told us ‘er name. Just handed me a pouch full of gold coins, she did.

THYME: What did she look like?

HECATE: About so high… Wore a red dress, she did… With them stockings with the seams up the back and them shoes with the real high pointy heels.

THYME: Stilletos.

HECATE: ‘Ad one of them, too.

THYME: Why did she want you to know MacBeth was coming here?

HECATE: Said it was his birthday. Wanted us to give him a special show. Even wrote it all out for us. Told her we’d be real happy to do it, but there was this one teensy, weensy little problem.

THYME: What’s that?

HECATE: None of us can read.

THYME: What’d she do?

HECATE: Got right up on that table there and did the whole number for us, she did. Ain’t ever seen nothin’ like it.

THYME: (to audience) That had to be Nola, alright. She always did her best work on a table top. So she paid off Hecate and the Vandellas to put on a show for MacBeth… Now the only question was… why? I asked the old witch if she could show me what Nola had her do.

HECATE: Sure, thing. (calls out) Latasha… Latoya… Lashana. (Three hags in slit skirts shuffle in)
THE WITCHES: All hail MacBeth, new thane of Glammis
  Thou shalt be king, and that's a promise
  Be strong, be proud and take no sass
  Ain't no one here can kick your ass.
  Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be
  Until Birnam Wood come to Dunsinane, see.
  That's your future, short and tall
  And now we're outta here, y'all.

(Thyme moves downstage as the lights fade on Hecate and The Witches)

THYME: (to audience) It was all starting to make sense. But proving it wasn't going to
be easy. It never is.

SOUND: RAIN, THUNDER, WIND

(Thyme turns up his collar)

THYME: (to audience) Wet, cold and miserable, I stumbled back into the castle. The
place was quiet... Dead quiet.

(SOUND: THE VERY LOUD BONGING OF THE CLOCK)

THYME: Except for that. The cell that passed for my room was pitch black.

(Thyme bumps into a table)

THYME: Owwww. (Thyme bumps into a wall) : Damn... (Thyme bumps into a chair)
Son of a .... Rather than risk further injury I decided to a light a single candle than curse
the darkness. (Thyme lights a candle) And that's when I saw it. (Light up on a small bed
with a knife stuck in it) A knife sticking straight up from my bed. The point of the blade
jammed into the mattress where my back should have been. That knife raised a lot of
questions. Was someone trying to kill me? Why did MacBeth go around talking to
himself? And why did King Duncan's son wear a skirt? The answer to those and many
other questions would have to wait until morning.

(Thyme pulls the knife out of the mattress and lays down)

(SOUND: ROOSTER CROWING)

THYME: My alarm clock went off at dawn. (gets up) I had to be careful moving around
the castle. Someone out there wanted me dead and until I found out who it was I'd be
walking around with a bullseye on my back. I did have one thing going for me. Whoever
left the knife in my bed, thought I was dead. Maybe if I caught them off guard, I could
use the element of surprise to... catch them off guard. It was a long shot, but it's all I
had. (Thyme crosses the stage) I was cautiously making my way along a narrow
corridor when a door opened and a man stepped into the hallway. (Mac Duff enters) I
couldn't tell who he was but I recognized the woman posed seductively in the doorway.
LADY MACBETH: *(enters and poses seductively)* I can’t remember the last time two minutes went by so… quickly.

THYME: I couldn’t hear his reply. It’s hard to understand a guy when he’s got a tongue in his mouth… *(Lady MacBeth kisses MacDuff)*… That isn’t his own. I waited for her door to close… *(Lady MacBeth exits)*… and moved in.

THYME: MacDuff

MACDUFF: *(surprised)* Thyme.

THYME: Surprised?

MACDUFF: Surprised? No… Why should I be surprised?

THYME: I don’t know… You look surprised… You sound surprised…. You act surprised.

MACDUFF: I’m surprised you’d think I was surprised.

THYME: Then you’re not surprised.?

MACDUFF: No. Of course I’m not surprised.

THYME: I find that surprising.

MACDUFF: Why?

THYME: Considering I just caught you playing tonsil hockey with the lady of the house.

MACDUFF: You’re not gonna tell the king, are you?

THYME: What you and the first lady do is your own business.

MACDUFF: Thanks, Thyme. I owe you one.

THYME: It’s time to pay up.

MACDUFF: So soon? Isn’t there usually a gap… a grace period?

THYME: Where were you last night around midnight?

MACDUFF: With Lady MacBeth. And we’ve got seven witnesses to prove it.

THYME: *(to audience)* MacDuff’s alibi got me to wondering. What were they doing that required seven witnesses?

MACBETH: *(enters sounding Shakespearean and tormented)* Day and night, night and day, why is it so that this longing for you follows where I go?

MACDUFF: If the King asks, I was never here and I got seven witnesses to prove it.
(MacDuff hurries off)

THYME: Your majesty.

MACBETH: (a little tipsy) Thyme… Is that you?

THYME: Yeah… It’s me.

MACBETH: (holds up a bottle) Wanna a littl

THYME: Maybe some other time.

MACBETH: You don’t know what your missing… Hundred year old scotch. Imported.

THYME: You know anything about this? (holds up the dagger that was stuck in his bed)

MACBETH: Is this a dagger I see before me?

THYME: You bet your sweet patootie it is. Recognize it?

MACBETH: Sure. It’s mine.

THYME: Remember when you saw it last?

MACBETH: I most certainly do. It was in your back.

THYME: So you admit it?

MACBETH: Admit what?

THYME: That you killed me.

MACBETH: Of course, I killed you.

THYME: Why?

MACBETH: Why did I kill you?

THYME: (to audience) Odd… I was standing there right in front of him and, yet, he kept talking like I was dead.

MACBETH: She told me to kill you.

THYME: Who told you to? (to audience) I already knew the answer, but I wanted to hear him say it.

MACBETH: You already know the answer.

THYME: But I want to hear you say it.
MACBETH: My wife. The one and only Lady MacBeth.

THYME: Why? Why did she want me dead?

MACBETH: Why does any woman want any man dead?

THYME: Good point. But what was her reason, specifically?

MACBETH: She said you were a good detective. That sooner or later you’d figure out I’d killed Duncan.

THYME: Did she tell you to do that, too?

MACBETH: You don’t know my wife like I do Thyme. (suspiciously) You don’t know my wife like I do, do you Thyme?

THYME: No. Of course not. (to audience) The guy had tried to kill me once already… I didn’t see any reason to make him mad.

MACBETH: She wanted to be queen. And in order for a woman to become a queen she has to be married to a king. That’s the rule… And I wasn’t a king. I was just a thane. I liked being a thane… It’s a good job being a thane. You get to hunt when you want… Fish when you want… Play a little golf when you want. You play golf, Mr. Thyme?

THYME: A little.

MACBETH: The Scotch invented golf. Did you know that Mr. Thyme?

THYME: No, I didn’t.

MACBETH: It’s true. We invented golf. Golf and haggis.

THYME: Great. Two things that give you indigestion. Why are you admitting all this?

MACBETH: Why not? You’re a ghost… Who are you going to tell?

THYME: (to audience) So that’s it… MacBeth thought I was a ghost… Either he was drunker than I thought or mad as a hatter. But, then again, this was twelfth century Scotland. These guys believed in wood sprites.

MACBETH: Besides, what difference does it make who I tell? I’m invincible.

THYME: Nobody’s invincible.

MACBETH: I am… The prophecy says so. I will reign as king until Birnham Wood comes to Dunsinane. And there are only two chances of that happening. Slim and… one other I can’t think of right now.

THYME: (to audience) I had my confession.
MACBETH Hear that Thyme? (reciting as he exits) It is three o’clock in the morning… And I… I’ve danced the whole night through… (staggered out)

THYME: (to audience) But there wasn’t anything I could do about it. There was no way I could take him down. The king had me in check. It was time to bring Malcom up to date.

(SOUND: THUNDER, LIGHTNING, RAIN, WIND)

(Thyme turns his collar up)

THYME: Wet, cold and miserable, I stumbled into Malcom’s camp.

(Thyme crosses the stage as a Scotch Guard in kilts enters)

GUARD: Who goes there?

THYME: Justin Thyme, fictional detective. I’m here to see Malcom, son of Duncan, brother of Donalden, cousin of Shamus, uncle of Hamish and close personal friend of Phil.

SCOTCH GUARD: Aye… We been expectin’ ya. Follow me.

(Thyme and the Guard exit.)

THYME (O.S.): The guard led me across a stream… around a meadow… down a path… through a wood… along a creek… over a hill… down a dale… and up to the heather on the hill.

(Under this we hear muffled footsteps and sloshing, birds singing, etc)

(The Guard enters from the other side of the stage. A couple of beats later Thyme enters out of breath)

SCOTCH GUARD: (announcing) Justin Thyme… Fictional detective.

(Malcom enters)

MALCOM: What news Justin Thyme?

THYME: I’ve got good news and bad news.

MALCOM: Me and my men could use some good news, Thyme.

THYME: The good news is you’re in the clear. MacBeth copped to everything. Killing your father… Stealing the crown…

MALCOM: Aye, that is good news. We must to action, Thyme. My men are tired of sitting around listening to bagpipe music all day.
THYME: *(to audience)* I couldn’t blame them.

MALCOM: We’ll attack Dunsinane Castle in the mornin’ and claim my rightful crown.

THYME: That’s the bad news. There’s no way three hundred men in skirts are going to take Dunsinane Castle.

MALCOM: If me and my laddies have to spend one more day here in Birnham Wood, we’ll…

THYME: Wait a minute… Did you say Birnham Wood?

MALCOM: Aye.

THYME: This is Birnham Wood?

MALCOM: Aye, this is Birnham Wood.

THYME: Malcom, I think I know a way to make this work.

MALCOM: Ya do? Then let’s here it man.

THYME: Here’s my plan… MacBeth thinks I’m a ghost… *(Thyme and Malcom huddle. After a few moments)* Then you storm the castle, capture MacBeth and snatch the crown.

MALCOM: Thyme… You’re plan is just crazy enough to work. I’ll ready my men.

*(Malcom exits.)*

*(SOUNDS: THUNDER, WIND AND RAIN)*

*(Thyme turns his collar up)*

THYME: *(to audience)* Cold, wet and miserable, I slipped back into the castle. It was quiet… Dead quiet.

*(SOUND: BONGING OF A BELL)*

THYME: Except for that damn bell. I crept quietly down the corridor.

*(SOUND: LOUD SQUEAKY SHOES)*

THYME: And entered my room

*(Thyme enters his cell. Lady MacBeth appears. She’s wearing a slinky red dress, black seamed stockings and stiletto heels)*

LADY MACBETH: Hello, Thyme.
THYME: *(to audience)* She was waiting for me.

LADY MACBETH: I was waiting for you. MacBeth told me he told you everything. He was never cut out to be king. He can’t handle the pressure. Not like you. We used to be a great team, Thyme. Remember?

THYME: What are you suggesting, cinammon ears?

LADY MACBETH: Why don’t you come over here and I’ll show you.

THYME: *(to audience)* Nola had something up her sleeve. Or she would have, if she’d been wearing a sleeve. The code of the fictional detective clearly states you never fool around with an accessory to murder. However, addendum 5, paragraph 7, sub-paragraph 8 states that it is not only permissible to fool around with an accessory to murder... if said fooling around is in pursuit of additional evidence... then said fooling around is distinctly encouraged. Especially if the accessory is put together like Nola. I made a mental note to the send a case of Chateau Lafayette-we-are-here, circa 1862, to the guy who wrote that paragraph.

LADY MACBETH: Thyme... How would like to be King of Scotland?

THYME: I don’t know. I never thought about it. What would I have to do?

LADY MACBETH: Marry the king’s widow.

THYME: But the king is still alive.

LADY MACBETH: A temporary condition, at best, don’t you think?

THYME: Can I give you my answer in the morning?

LADY MACBETH: Sure. There’s no rush.

THYME: *(to audience)* She said as she slipped into something more comfortable... namely the bed in the middle of the room.

*(Lady MacBeth lies down on Thyme’s bed. He crosses to her)*

*(BLACKOUT)*

*(A moment or two later, LIGHTS UP on Thyme and Lola lying in the bed. She’s smoking a cigarette)*

LADY MACBETH: *(annoyed)* When I said there was no rush, Thyme, I meant there was no rush.

*(SOUNDS OF ALL HELL BREAKING LOOSE)*

LADY MACBETH: What the hell is that?
THYME: Stay here, vanilla knees.

(Thyme gets off the bed and crosses the stage)

(SOUNDS OF PEOPLE RUNNING AND SHOUTING)

THYME: (to audience) Bishops, knights, rooks and pawns were everywhere. (MacDuff runs by. Thyme grabs him) What’s going on, MacDuff?

MACDUFF: The castle is under attack.

(Lady MacBeth joins them)

LADY MACBETH: Under attack? Where’s the king?

MACDUFF: On the battlements, m’lady.

LADY MACBETH: Defending the castle?

MACDUFF: Speaking in iambic pentameter.

LADY MACBETH: We’d better get up there.

MACDUFF: No, please don’t go, m’lady. It’s too dangerous. Stay with me. I’ll protect you.

LADY MACBETH: You gotta be kidding.

MACDUFF: This is our chance, m’lady. While the battle is going on out front, we can slip out the back. Just you and me.

LADY MABBETH: Really just you and me?

MACDUFF: I own some land on the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond. We could build a cottage. Raise sheep.

LADY MACBETH: Raise sheep. Of course... Just what I’ve always wanted. (flirtatiously) But first you must do something for me, MacDuff.

MACDUFF: Yes m’lady... Anything.

LADY MACBETH: Good... Now I want you to go up on the battlements and do what you do best.

MACDUFF: Yes, m’lady... Of, course m’lady. What I do best. Just one question m’lady.

LADY MACBETH: Yes?

MACDUFF: What is it I do best?

LADY MACBETH: Make yourself a target, of course.
MACDUFF: Of course… Make myself a target. *(shouting as he exits)* Fear not majesty, I’m coming.

*(He runs off happily)*

LADY MACBETH: *(very Shakespearean)* Oh what fools these mortals be. *(turns to audience knowingly)* Especially, the male mortals. *(to Thyme)* This is the chance we’ve been waiting for, Thyme. Let’s go.

*(They hurry off stage)*

LADY MACBETH (O.S.) We’ll take the stairway to the landing that holds the ladder that leads to the doorway…. that opens on to the corridor… that runs through the upper tower… that overlooks the bridge… that crosses to the door… that provides entrance to the battlements.

*(Under the above we hear doors opening, doors closing, footsteps, chains rattling, gates squeaking, etc. This gives way to the…)*

*(SOUND: NOISE OF BATTLE, TRUMPETS, MEN SHOUTING)*

*(Thyme and Lady MacBeth enter. He’s winded from the climb.)*

THYME: Ever think of putting in an elevator?

*(MacBeth enters)*

MACBETH: If it were done when ’tis done, then ’twere well it were done quickly.

*(Lady MacBeth pulls Thyme to one side)*

LADY MACBETH: Let’s do it now. Right here.

THYME: As much as I’d love to, persimmons ears, I don’t think we’ve got two minutes to spare. In case you haven’t noticed, the castle is under attack.

LADY MACBETH: Don’t flatter yourself, flatfoot. I meant this is our chance to make MacBeth… macdead.

THYME: Hold on tangelo lips, I’ve got a better idea. *(sounding ghost-like until further indicated, Thyme crosses to MacBeth)* MacBeth… MacBeth…

MACBETH: Who calls my name?

THYME: It is I… The ghost of Justin Thyme.

MACBETH: Begone… Ghost of Justin Thyme… Begone…

THYME: Fat chance, MacBeth… The jig is up.
MACBETH: The jig will be up when Birnham Wood comes to Dunsinane.

THYME: Look around you MacBeth... What do you see?

MACBETH: Trees... As far as the eye can see... Nothing but trees.

THYME: Yes, trees. But you are missing the big picture... You're not seeing the forest for the trees.

MACBETH: Yes... I see it now... A forest. A big, green, advancing forest.

THYME: Good... Now ask yourself this question. Was that forest there yesterday?

MACBETH: No... It was not.

THYME: Do you recognize that forest, MacBeth?

MACBETH: Yes... It's... It's... Ohhhh, sh...

THYME: That's right MacBeth... Birnham Wood has come to Dunsinane. Now ask yourself this question. Do I feel lucky? Well do ya MacBeth?

MACBETH: (panicking) I'm doomed.... I'm doomed... A horse... A horse... My kingdom for a horse.

LADY MACBETH: Wrong play you Scottish has been. It's all over... You're through... Turn in your crown and clean out your desk.

MACBETH: What's happening?

LADY MACBETH: Call it a "hostile takeover."

MACBETH: The prophecy has come to pass.

LADY MACBETH: There was no prophecy, you moron. I paid off the witches to tell you all that crap so you'd have the cojones to knock off Duncan.

MACBETH: There was no prophecy?

LADY MACBETH. Just like Thyme here isn't a ghost.

MACBETH: Of course, he's a ghost. I killed him.

THYME: (normal voice) Sorry to bust your bubble, Mac. But the only thing you killed was my mattress.

LADY MACBETH: Listen to me, haggis for brains. There's no such thing as ghosts... There's no such thing as witches... There's no such thing as prophecies and the tooth fairy doesn't leave money under your pillow.
THYME: And that’s not a forest out there.

MACBETH: It’s not Birnham Wood?

THYME: No, king… That’s Malcom’s army out there… They just moved all of Birnham Wood to Dunsinane.

MACBETH: Every branch? Every leaf?

THYME: Every twig… Like I always say… You can’t make an omelet without causing an ecological disaster now and then.

(Malcom enters)

MALCOM: It worked, laddie. Your plan worked. We’ve captured the castle.

THYME: They’re all yours Malcom.

LADY MACBETH: What are you talking about, Thyme? We had a deal. Remember? You would kill MacBeth, marry me and together we would rule this land and in the tradition of those great kings and queens before us, we’d suck the inhabitants dry.

THYME: You had a deal, Nola. But you forgot one thing.

LADY MACBETH: What’s that?

THYME: I’m a cop, a shamus, a gumshoe… a dick.

MACBETH: You can say that again.

THYME: Sometimes it’s good business to let people think you’re corrupt. They trust you more.

MALCOM: I’ll take that crown now MacBeth… (takes MacBeth’s crown) Life, as you once knew it, is over.

MACBETH: Life… What is life? Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player That struts and frets his hour upon the stage And then is heard no more: it is a tale Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing.

LADY MACBETH: (to MacBeth) Oh, spare me the rhyming couplets. (to Thyme) You can’t turn me over to Malcom, Thyme. Don’t I mean anything to you? What about the times I fed your insatiable passion… Banked the fires of your raging lust? Rode your…

MACBETH: You fed his insatiable passion? You banked the fires of his raging lust? You rode hi…?

THYME: Like there was no tomorrow.
MACBETH: You never fed my passion... You never banked my fire. You never rode my...

LADY MACBETH: Because you're a sniveling coward. *(turns all of her charms on Malcom)* Not like Malcom here... Now this is a real man... A man who stands up for what he believes, no matter what. A man willing to fight and die for his country and for the woman he loves and doing it all in a flattering, knee length tartan plaid skirt by Stella McCartney. Isn't that right Malcom?

THYME: *(to audience)* It was over. King Duncan's killers had been exposed. Malcom had been exonerated and returned to his rightful place on the throne. Now he could begin bleeding the peasants dry.

*(MacDuff enters in the custody of the Scottish Guard)*

MACDUFF: Milady... What's to become of me? I did everything you asked.

THYME: *(to audience)* Of all those caught up in this sorry mess, it was MacDuff, I felt sorry for most. *(to MacDuff)* What do you mean everything?

MACDUFF: Everything.

THYME: Like for instance?

MACDUFF: Like for instance... Doin' away with those two poor unfortunates.

THYME: Which two poor unfortunates?

MACDUFF: Those two poor unfortunates starin' down at ya from the front gate.

THYME: That was you?

MACDUFF: She made me Thyme. I didn't wanna do it... She made me kill 'em... And all the time she knew it. I guess she always knew it. They was just sittin' there... not botherin anybody... eatin' their dinner... And after it was all over, you know what she says to me?

THYME: No... Tell me. What does she say to?

MACDUFF: Leave the knife. Bring the oatcakes.

THYME: Look at this way, MacGruff...

MACDUFF: MacDuff.

THYME: Whatever... Better men than you have gotten caught in Nola's web. Much better men than you.

SCOTCH GUARD: C'mon now... Move it along. *(The Guard leads MacDuff off.)*
THYME: *(to audience)* The poor schmuck never had a chance. He made the mistake of fallin’ for a dame who promised him a trip to the moon on gossamer wings and, instead, booked him a coach seat to hell. Come to think of it, every coach seat is hell.

MACBETH: Out, out, brief candle!

THYME: As for MacBeth.. Well, in the end he was just an ordinary guy who wanted what ordinary guys want… To hunt a little. To fish a little. Get in a round of golf, now and then. Sleep with the help. Of all the tragic characters I’ve come across, MacBeth has to be the most tragic.

MACBETH: To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
*(The Guard returns and leads MacBeth off)*
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.

THYME: Not to mention the most depressing.

LADY MACBETH: *(flirtatiously)* Oh Malcom, please…

THYME: As for Nola…?

LADY MACBETH: *(girlishly flirtatious as she and Malcom exit arm in arm)* Malcom… I’m not that kind of girl. But with you I could learn to be.

THYME: *(to audience)* I think it was Big Bill Shakespeare who said it best… Whatever Nola wants… Nola gets.

*(SOUND: WIND, RAIN, THUNDER)*

*(Thyme turns up his collar)*

SOUND: BLUESY SAXOPHONE

*(Thyme exits)*

*LIGHTS DOWN* 

THE END