THE UNKINDEST CUT
A Justin Thyme Mystery

By Bruce Kane

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

JUSTIN THYME - A hard boiled Sam Spade type private eye

EFFIE - Thyme's over developed secretary with the underdeveloped typing skills

NARRATOR - Wears a black suit, white shirt and black tie. Speaks in the clipped tones reminiscent of Rod Serling on the Twilight Zone.

DOLORES - Sexy, well built and hard as nails diva

WILLARD WETSY - Dreamy doctor

NURSE CLAVICLE - The world's sexiest nurse. Breathy voiced, everything she says comes out as a double entendre.

BETSY - Desperately very pregnant nurse

MED EX GUY - Delivers medications for Med Ex.

HELEN - From accounting... Prim in dress and demeanor. Wears her hair in a bun.

ORDERLY #1 - Hospital orderly

ORDERLY #2 - Second hospital orderly

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE - Off stage voice.
SETTINGS

THYME'S OFFICE - Generally rundown. A window faces out over a black and white cityscape. The office is furnished with a beat up wooden coat rack, desk and swivel chair.

HOSPITAL WARD - Can be as simple or detailed as you like.
PRODUCTION NOTES

Most of this play is set in a soap opera like hospital, where the main characters speak dramatically in the highly stylized, self important manner popular in television daytime dramas.

On the other hand, the characters of Justin Thyme and Effie effect the hard boiled dialogue popularized in the detective novels and films of the 1940's and 50's.

The Narrator speaks in the clipped style of Rod Serling introducing The Twilight Zone
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WARNING No one shall make any changes to this play for the purpose of production. Publication of this play does not imply its availability for production.

"THE UNKINDEST CUT"
A Justin Thyme Mystery

SCENE 1

MUSIC: The sound of a bluesy, film noir saxophone plays in the distance.

LIGHTS UP on THYME’S OFFICE.
THYME ENTERS, hangs up his trench coat and fedora.
(to audience)
I’d just got in from an all night stakeout. I was cold, tired and miserable. The only thing I wanted was a hot drink with a cool blonde.

(yawns)
Or a cool drink with a hot blonde.
(drops into his chair)
As long as it involved a drink and a blonde.
(leans back and yawns)
If push came to shove...
(yawns and begins to drop off into sleep)
I really... wasn’t... that... thirsty.

*Thyme falls asleep. Saxophone out.*

(crying out in his sleep)

No... No... No... No...

*The NARRATOR ENTERS downstage and addresses the audience*

PRESENTING FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION ONEJustin Thyme, an operative of the F.B.I. The Fictional Bureau Of Investigation. Mr. Thyme investigates the toughest, dirtiest crimes in English literature. He is by every definition of the word – a fictional detective. In a moment, a woman will walk through that door who will launch our intrepid gumshoe on a journey that will threaten his very manhood.

*EFFIE perambulates in.*

(NO. Not that woman. Another woman.*
EFFIE
(crosses to Thyme)

Boss.

THYME

No... No...

NARRATOR
On this journey Mr. Thyme will be travelling to another dimension - a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. A land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas.

THYME
(in his sleep)
Put down that knife!

NARRATOR
Heavenly shades of night are falling. It’s Twilight Time. Deep in the night a voice is calling... It’s Twilight Time.
(hums the Twilight Zone theme)

The Narrator exits.

EFFIE
(shakes Thyme)

Boss...

THYME
(waking up)
Oh... I was having a nightmare. Someone was going to cut off my...

Cut off your what?

Never mind.

EFFIE

Well, don’t you look like crap.
THYME
You wouldn’t look so hot either if you’d been standing outside some dame’s apartment in the pouring rain trying to light a wet cigarette only to find out the skirt had skipped town with some guy you’d loaned two hundred simoleons, knowing you’d never see the dough or the frail again.

EFFIE
Well, pull yourself together. There’s a woman outside wants to see you.

THYME
Tell her I’m outta town... Tell her I died... Tell her...

DOLORES BARGES IN wearing a short tight fitting dress with the word DANGER printed on it.

EFFIE
Mr. Thyme?

The Narrator pops back in.

NARRATOR
(slightly annoyed)
Okay... That’s the woman.

Narrator pops back out.

THYME
(to audience)
From the moment she undulated through my door I could see the dame had “danger” written all over her.
(to Effie)
Tell the lady to come right in.

EFFIE
A tower of strength.

DOLORES
I’m Dolores Campbell Robinson O'Hara Jackson Goldfarb...
And I’m Justin Thyme.

And I’m not finished.

Sorry.

Where did I leave off?

Goldfarb.

Thank you.

You’re welcome

Goldfarb Campbell O’Hara

I think you covered that already... O’Hara.

There were two of them.

Two?

Father and son.

At the same time?

Not exactly. Where was I?
O’Hara... The younger.

Yes.. O’Hara, O’Malley, O’Shaughnesy...

Oh, my.

Johnson and Johnson..

Father and son?

The corporation.

You married a corporation?

Why not? According to the Supreme Court, corporations are people, too.

That must have been some honeymoon.

The sex wasn’t much. But the shopping was fantastic.

May I continue?

Knock yourself out.


You’ve certainly been a busy girl.
THYME
What can I do for you Missus Hargrove?

DOLORES
That’s Mizz Hargrove. I’m presently between husbands.

EFFIE
There are so many ways to view that.

DOLORES
My last husband died in a tragic backgammon accident.

THYME
A lot of that going around. Now, what can I do for you?

DOLORES
I think someone is trying to kill me?

THYME
What makes you think that?

Dolores turns around to reveal a knife sticking out of her back. She turns back to Thyme.

EFFIE
Must making sleeping on your back a real challenge.

DOLORES
It makes everything I do on my back a real challenge.

THYME
When did you first notice the shiv?

EFFIE
Immediately following the last board meeting.

WILLARD
Board meeting?
DOLORES
I inherited my late husband’s corporation. I’m the CEO, the COO, the CFO and everything else that begins with C.

THYME
You think it was one of your business associates?

DOLORES
It could be anybody Mr. Thyme. You see, when I have to, I’m not above grinding my stilettos into anyone who gets in my way. Sometimes I even find it pleasurable.

THYME
(to audience)
The dame was starting to interest me.

DOLORES
Can you help me Mr. Thyme? I don’t want to die. Not just yet anyway. Not when I have so much to live for. Not while I’m still young and restless.

EFFIE
One outta two ain’t bad.

DOLORES
I only have one life to live and I intend to keep on living it while I’m bold and beautiful. In the here and the now without some guiding light showing me a path to another world. Find the person who is trying kill me, Mr. Thyme and I’ll pay you whatever you want.

THYME
(to audience)
That sounded good. Real good.

DOLORES
(leans over Thyme’s desk)
And I’ll also see you’re handsomely rewarded.

THYME
(to audience)
That sounded even better.
DOLORES
Money is no object, Mr. Thyme. You see, I’m rich. Very rich.

THYME
Just how rich are you?

DOLORES
I’m so rich, I don’t know how rich I am.

EFFIE
That’s rich.

THYME
(to audience)
I knew I’d have to watch my step around this one. She reminded me of a dame I once knew in Frisco. I’ll never forget her. Her name was Velma... Or was it Selma? Anyway, she was cold, mean and vicious. She’d rip your heart out without missing a beat. I was nuts about her.

(to Dolores)
Where can I find you?

DOLORES
At Generic Hospital.

THYME
Going in to have that pig sticker removed?

DOLORES
Hardly, Mr. Thyme. I own the joint.

THYME
How do I get to this Generic Hospital?

DOLORES
Take the last train to Clarksville.

THYME
(to Effie)
Got that canteloupe knees?

EFFIE
Got it.
DOLORES
And I’ll meet you at the station.

THYME
The station.

DOLORES
You can be there by four thirty if you make a reservation.

THYME
Is that it?

DOLORES
Yeah, yeah, yeah.
(crosses to door, looks back over her shoulder seductively)
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dolores exits.

EFFIE
What happened to tell her to get lost? That you were dead?

THYME
What am I supposed to do, cumquat cheeks, turn the dame away in her hour of need because she’s got cleavage that makes the Grand Canyon look like the sixth hole at Pebble Beach? Leave her hanging just because she’s blessed with a keester you could stage a production of Hamlet on? No. Not Justin Thyme. Not this fictional detective. Sometimes a man’s gotta do what a man’s gotta do.

EFFIE
(picks up phone)
Hello? Is this the Vatican? I have someone I’d like to nominate for sainthood.

Effie hangs up. Thyme gets up and crosses around his desk.
THYME
Hand me my trench coat, apple hips.
   (Effie helps him slip on his trench coat)
My fedora.
   (Effie plops the fedora on his head)
Now do me a favor and cue my saxophone accompaniment.

   Effie cues the unseen sax player.
   We hear the sound of the bluesy SAXOPHONE. Thyme and Effie exit

LIGHTS DOWN ON THYME’S OFFICE

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP on the HOSPITAL SET.

Saxophone out.

TWO ORDERLIES ENTER talking.
During the exchange Thyme enters and overhears them.

ORDERLY #1
Google.

ORDERLY#2
Google?

ORDERLY #1
The word is Dolores is selling the hospital to Google.

ORDERLY#2
Just like that cold hearted witch. She’ll make a pile of dough and we’ll be replaced by robots.

ORDERLY #1
Talk is they’re gonna slap their name of everything. Google Med, Google pharmacy, Google I.C.U. Even the medical staff.
ORDERLY#2
The medical staff?

ORDERLY #1
Once they take over, all the doctors will be referred to as Google Docs.

THYME
(reacting to the audience’s groans)
And they wonder why people hate hospitals.

ORDERLY #1 walks past Thyme.

THYME
Excuse me. Could you..?

The Orderly just keeps on going. Thyme approaches Orderly #2.

THYME
I was wondering if...

Orderly #2 ignores him and exits.

THYME
(to audience)
When Dolores didn’t show up at the train station I hot footed it over here to see what I could find out and what I couldn’t find out. Sometimes what you can’t find out is more important than what you can find out. Only problem is... you can’t find out.

WILLARD WETSY enters. He wears a white hospital jacket with a stethoscope draped around his neck.

THYME
Excuse me. I...
Willard holds Thyme’s wrist and checks his watch, taking Thyme’s pulse.

WILLARD

Mmmmmmmmm.

THYME

If you could just point me...

Willard pulls down Thyme’s eyelids and peers into his eyes.

WILLARD

(shakes his head)


THYME

You don’t understand. I’m here to....

WILLARD

Open your mouth

(Thyme opens his mouth.
Willard inserts a tongue depressor)

Say ‘ahhhhhh.”

THYME

Ahhhhh.

WILLARD

Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

THYME

I’m not here for...

The bluesy saxophone announces the entrance of NURSE CLAVICLE, who undulates in.
THYME
(to audience)
Before I could tell the Doc what I was there for... my
attention took a sudden turn for the nurse.

Saxophone out.

CLAVICLE
(to Thyme)
Well, hello there tall, dark and slightly jaundice.

THYME
The dame was throwin’ more curves in my direction than Sandy
Koufax the day he struck out eighteen. She told me her name
was Clavicle.

CLAVICLE
My name is Clavicle.

THYME
(to audience)
Nurse Clavicle.

CLAVICLE
Nurse Clavicle.

THYME
(to audience)
But, I could call her what her patients called her.

CLAVICLE
But, you can call me what my patients call me.

THYME
(to audience)
Hey, nurse.

CLAVICLE
(brushing up against Thyme)
Not even close.
WILLARD
Nurse Clavicle.

CLAVICLE
(swaying in Willard’s direction)
Yes, Doctor?

WILLARD
Would you take this patient...

THYME
I’m not a...

WILLARD
What did you say your name was?

THYME
I didn’t.

WILLARD
Take Mr. Ididn’t down to examining immediately. See that he gets a complete physical.

CLAVICLE
Head to toe?

WILLARD
Head to toe.

CLAVICLE
Top to bottom?

WILLARD
Top to bottom.

CLAVICLE
And everything in between?

WILLARD
And everything in between.
CLAVICLE

I’ll do my best.

THYME
(to audience)

I was feeling better already.

Clavicle takes Thyme’s tie, turns her back to him and drapes the tie over her shoulder.

CLAVICLE

If you’ll come with me Mr. I didn’t, we can begin padding your bill.

(starts to exit, then turns back to Willard)

Will I see you in emergency... Doctor?

WILLARD

Only if there is an emergency, Nurse.

CLAVICLE

Oh, I’m sure I can think of something.

She leads Thyme off. Willard exits in the opposite direction.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE (O.S.)

Attention please. Today’s cafeteria special is liver. Our thanks to patient Harry Larson in Room 4D for the donation. Have a speedy recovery, Hank.

Orderly#1 pushes in a hospital bed containing Thyme and Clavicle. She’s wearing his fedora and smoking a cigarette.

CLAVICLE

I never really wanted to be a nurse. My dream was to work in waste management.
THYME
(to audience)
Nurse Clavicle had given new meaning to the phrase “complete physical.” And the best part was, the whole thing was covered by insurance. Well, not the best part... but close.

Dolores strides in.

DOLORES
Nurse Clavicle. What are you doing down here caring for patients? Why aren’t you in the cardiac ward, where you belong, causing heart attacks.

Clavicle returns the fedora to Thyme’s head and slides out of bed.

THYME
Thanks for the check up, canteloupe cheeks. I don’t think I ever enjoyed a colonoscopy more.

CLAVICLE
My pleasure. We’ll have to do it again... real soon.

As Clavicle exits past Dolores she turns and makes a stabbing motion in Dolores’s direction

DOLORES
And, Mr. Thyme, what do you think you’re doing, lying around here dallying with my nurses when you’re supposed to be finding out who’s trying to kill me?

THYME
Talk to the docs. They got me pegged as a patient.

DOLORES
A patient? Really? Mmmmmmm... Actually that’s quite brilliant.
THYME

What’re you talkin’ about?

DOLORES

As long as the staff thinks you’re a patient, they’ll ignore you completely. It’s the perfect cover.

THYME

I thought so.

DOLORES

Keep up the good work, Thyme. Let me know when you come up with something.

* Dolores exits revealing a second knife sticking out of her back. Willard enters.

WILLARD

Well, how are we feeling Mr. I didn’t?

THYME

My name isn’t...

WILLARD

Well, that’s good to hear. Now, let’s take a look at your chart.

(scans Thyme’s chart)

Blood is normal... Cholesterol is slightly elevated, but well within range. Oh... that’s odd.

THYME

What’s odd?

WILLARD

Your heart rate.

THYME

(worried)

What about my heart rate?
WILLARD
It seems to have spiked several times during your exam.

THYME
That wasn’t the only thing that spiked.

WILLARD
Let’s see what else we have here. Uh huh... Uh huh... Uh huh.

THYME
(nervously)
Did you find somethin’ Doc?

WILLARD
Uh huh.

THYME
What?

WILLARD
Nothing I’d worry about.

THYME
Good.

WILLARD
But you? That’s another story. It’s look we’re going to have perform an... ectomy.

Dramatic organ music sting.

THYME
An ectomy?

Dramatic organ music sting

WILLARD
Yes, Mr. I didn’t. An... ectomy.

Dramatic organ music sting
THYME
(to audience)
This didn’t sound good. I remember my old man once telling me there were three things in life you should never do. One... never buy a used car from a guy named Slim. Two... Never play poker with a guy named Lucky. And, three, never, ever do anything ending in ectomy.

WILLARD
Don’t worry, Mr. I didn’t. Ectomy is just a surgical term we doctors use when we’re going to remove something from your body.

THYME
Remove something from my body?? What something from my body??

WILLARD
I’m not sure yet. But, we’ll come up with something. After all we are a hospital.

Nurse Betsy waddles in looking sixteen months pregnant.

BETSY
Willard, I have to talk to you.

WILLARD
Not now Nurse Betsy. Can’t you see I’m with a patient?

THYME
(to Willard)
Could we get back to the remove something...

BETSY
(to Thyme)
Please stay out of this.
(to Willard)
I have an important announcement to make Willard.

WILLARD
I don’t have time for announcements. Can’t you see this man’s very life hangs in the balance?
THYME
(sits up)
Balance?? What balance???

BETSY
(pushing Thyme down)
I told you to stay out of this.
(to Willard)
Willard, I want you to marry me.

WILLARD
You know that’s impossible. Dolores would never permit it.

BETSY
Leave my mother out of this.

THYME
(sits up)
Dolores is your..?

WILLARD
(pushes Thyme down)
Besides, I’m old enough to be your...

BETSY
Yes? Old enough to be my...

WILLARD
Brother.
(both Thyme and Betsy give him a “You’ve got be kidding” look)
Okay... Your... father. When you think about it, I could very well be your father.

BETSY
So could half the fortune 500, but that’s besides the point. You have to marry me, Willard.

WILLARD
I don’t have to do anything of the sort.
THYME
Maybe you two would rather be alone.

BETSY
(to Thyme)
I told you to stay it out of this.
(to Willard)
I wasn’t going to say anything, but it seems I have no choice. Willard...
(dramatically)
I’m with child.

Dramatic soap opera organ sting.

WILLARD
(looking around)
I don’t see any child.

BETSY
Not with a child. With child. I’m... what’s the medical term for it?

THYME
Knocked up?

BETSY
That’s it.

WILLARD
You’re pregnant???

BETSY
Not so loud. Do you want the whole hospital to know?

WILLARD
How far along are you?

BETSY
I don't know. Six or seven days.

WILLARD
Six or seven days? Are you sure?
BETSY
My home pregnancy test just red lined.

THYME
Red lined? It must have overheated, blown a gasket and thrown a rod.

WILLARD
Aren’t you being a little bit premature?

BETSY
Speak for yourself.

WILLARD
Are you saying...?

THYME
That’d be my guess.

WILLARD
(to Thyme)
You stay out of this.
(to Betsy)
That’s not possible. I had that taken care of when I signed on as your mother’s lawyer slash lover. It was part of the “better safe than sorry” clause in my contract.

THYME
Did you say lawyer?

WILLARD
Yes. Lawyer. I'm her mother's lawyer.

BETSY
But you told me you were a gynecologist.

THYME
Gynecologist???

WILLARD
I always wanted to be a doctor. But when I couldn't get into medical school...
THYME

Couldn’t get into..?

BETSY

(to Thyme)

Don’t make me give you a shot.

(to Willard)

But if you’re not my baby’s father...

WILLARD

Yes?

BETSY

It had to be...

WILLARD

Yes?

BETSY

(dramatically)

Ramon.

Dramatic soap opera organ sting

WILLARD

Ramon?

THYME

Ramon?

BETSY

Yes, Ramon.

WILLARD

That’s impossible.

BETSY

Why? Did he have a safe but sorry clause too?

WILLARD

Your mother had me fire him a year ago.
BETSY
Okay... Then it was...

WILLARD
Yes?

BETSY
(dramatically)
The hunky pool guy.

Dramatic soap opera organ sting.

WILLARD
Albert?

BETSY
If that’s his name.

WILLARD
Couldn’t be.

BETSY
Did mother have you fire him, too?

WILLARD
No, he’s been servicing the widow Henderson since January.

BETSY
But the widow Henderson doesn’t have a pool.

WILLARD
Who said anything about a pool?

THYME
(to audience)
Feel free to provide your own rim shot.

BETSY
Well, if it wasn’t Albert.

WILLARD
Yes?
Then it had to be...

Yes?

(dramatically)
The MedEx Guy.

Dramatic soap opera music sting.

The MedEx Guy?

Who’s the MedEx Guy?

(to Thyme)
He delivers all of our medical supplies.

Among other things.

The Med Ex Guy? Really?? Those guys are in and out in two minutes... Tops.

(ruefully)
Then it was definitely the MedEx Guy.

The MedEx Guy enters carrying MedEx packages. Betsy sees him.

You!!! I want to talk to you!

The MedEx Guy turns and rushes out the way he came in with Betsy hot on his tail.
PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Doctor Wetsy.

WILLARD
What now?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Nurse Clavicle needs you in emergency.

WILLARD
Again?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Again.

WILLARD
(exiting)
How many emergencies can one woman have in a day?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Don’t forget the chardonnay.

Willard exits. The Orderlies enter and hook Thyme to a Rube Goldberg like machine. Feel free to invent whatever machine you want. While this is going on we hear...

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Doctor Femur, wanted in surgery... Dr. Ulna wanted in X-ray. Doctor Pectoral... wanted in seven states.

ORDERLY #1
Didya hear? The doctors took a vote on who they thought would be the first one to remove Dolores’s spleen without anesthesia.

ORDERLY#2
Who won?
ORDERLY #1
It was a tie. They all voted for themselves.

ORDERLY #2
Here she comes.

ORDERLY #1
Minus her broom.

Dolores returns. The Orderlies quickly exit.

DOLORES
Well, Mr. Thyme?

THYME
I’m working on it.

DOLORES
Well, you’d better hurry up. I’m a very busy woman. I have several million dollar deals in the works. Being murdered could cost me a fortune. The clock is ticking, Mr. Thyme. The clock is ticking.

THYME
You’re telling me. Your Docs are getting ready to strip me for parts.

The Med Ex Guy comes running through, chased by Betsy.

BETSY
Wait, I want to talk...
   (spots Dolores)
Mother.

DOLORES
I told you never to call me that. Do you think I want people to know I am actually capable of supporting human life?

BETSY
I am going to marry Willard.
THYME
What about the Med Ex Guy?

BETSY
(to Thyme)
Don’t make me give you a shot?

DOLORES
Don’t be silly. Willard will never marry you.

BETSY
But I love him and he loves me.

DOLORES
Willard will love who I tell him to love... when it suits my needs. And it certainly won’t be you, you silly girl.

BETSY
You can’t stop me. I am determined to be Mrs. Willard Wetsy.

Dolores takes Betsy’s arm and lead her downstage for a woman to woman talk.

DOLORES
Mrs. Willard Wetsy. That’s one way to look at it. But there is another. Think about this, my darling Betsy. Do you really want to go through life known as...
(signals the audience to fill in the blank)

AUDIENCE
Betsy Wetsy.

As the realization sweeps over Betsy...

BETSY
Oh.
DOLORES
Now, if anybody wants me, I’ll be in my office pulling the wings off of flies.

THYME
Is that supposed to be some kind of metaphor?

DOLORES
What gave you that idea?

Dolores exits revealing a third knife now sticking out of her back.

BETSY
Mother or not, someday I am going....

Betsy makes a knife stabbing motion.

The Med Ex Guy enters.

BETSY
You!!! Stop!!!

The Med Ex takes off. Betsy starts after him then stops.

BETSY
Oh God, I gotta pee.

She hurries off trying to hold her knees together. Willard returns.

WILLARD
Well, how are we Mr. I Didnt?

THYME
Not as good as you, apparently.
WILLARD
Excuse me?

THYME
You’re coat’s on backwards.

Willard takes his coat off, turns it right side out and puts it back on as HELEN, a prim looking hospital administrator in a tailored jacket, skirt and glasses... enters.

HELEN
Doctor Wetsy, I have to talk to you.

THYME
Who are you?

HELEN
Helen from accounting.

THYME
(to Willard)
Touched all the bases, did ya’ Doc?

WILLARD
Not now Helen. Can’t you see this patient needs my full attention?

HELEN
I work in accounting. All terminal patients look alike to me.

THYME
(sits up)
Terminal??? What do you know that I...

HELEN
(pushing Thyme down)
I’ve put it off long enough Doctor. I want to know when you are going to marry me.
WILLARD
Marry you? That’s out of the question. You’re administration. I’m medical. You know Dolores expressly prohibits mixed marriages.

HELEN
Well, if you poisoned her like you promised.

THYME
(sits up)
Poisoned her?

WILLARD
(pushing Thyme down)
You know I never meant that. It’s just something guys say in the throes of passion. Like “I love you.”

HELEN
Speaking of throes of passion. There is something you need to know.

WILLARD
Know? What?

HELEN
I’m...
(dramatically)
.. carrying.

Dramatic soap opera organ sting.

WILLARD
You’re packing a gun?

HELEN
No, I’m not packing a gun... I’m...

Takes a very long pause.

THYME
(to audience)
This is what’s known in the theatre as the “pregnant” pause.
WILLARD
Are you saying what I think you’re saying?

THYME
(to audience)
Quick on the uptake, isn’t he?

WILLARD
But’s that’s impossible.

HELEN
Why is that so impossible?

WILLARD
Well, for one thing, when I signed on as...

THYME
(to Willard)
Allow me.

(to Helen)
Y’see when Dr. Hot Pants here signed on as Dolores’s shyster slash boy toy, she had him...

Makes a scissors motion with two fingers.

HELEN
You’re a shyster?

WILLARD
I prefer attorney at law.

HELEN
You told me you were a podiatrist.

THYME
(to Willard)
Podiatrist? You’re kidding. The was your opening line? I’m a podiatrist?

(Willard shrugs; Thyme turns back to Helen)
And you found that irresistible?

(Helen shrugs)
HELEN
Well, if it wasn’t you...

WILLARD
Yes?

HELEN
It had to be...

THYME
Yes?

HELEN
(dramatically)
Kevin.

_Dramatic soap opera organ sting._

WILLARD
Kevin?

THYME
Not Kevin.

HELEN
Yes, Kevin.

WILLARD
But, that’s not possible. Dolores shipped him out a year ago when she caught him taking second helpings in the cafeteria.

HELEN
Well, if it wasn’t Kevin... It had to be...

WILLARD
Yes?

HELEN
(dramatically)
Pierre.

_Dramatic soap opera organ sting._
THYME
Who the hell is Pierre?

WILLARD
Dolores’s French chef. She fired him ten months ago.

THYME
For taking second helpings in the cafeteria?

WILLARD
For taking second helpings in the secretarial pool.

HELEN
Well... If it wasn’t Kevin... And it wasn’t Pierre... it had to be...

WILLARD
Yes?

HELEN
(dramatically)
Phil.

Dramatic soap opera organ sting.

THYME
Phil?

HELEN
Or John... Maybe David... Could’ve been Bob... He was cute...
Or Harry... Or...
(points)
...that guy in the front row. Or...

The Med Ex Guy runs in.

THYME
Right on cue.

Betsy enters chasing the Med Ex Guy.
HELEN
You!!! I want to talk to you!

BETSY
Get in line, sweetheart.

They both chase the Med Ex Guy off stage.

THYME
Close call, Doc. Tell me something. Did you really have a “better safe than sorry” clause in your contract?

WILLARD
I’m going to have to invoke attorney-client privilege on that one, Mr. Ididnt.

Willard exits. The Orderlies return with more Rube Goldberg devices they begin hooking up to Thyme. Over this we hear...

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Your attention please. Will the patient with the scalpel sewn into his chest cavity this morning please return it to the O.R... Immediately. Don’t make us come and get it.

ORDERLY #1
I heard the nurses got together and raised over a thousand dollars.

ORDERLY #2
For charity?

ORDERLY #1
For a hitman.

They exit as Willard returns.

WILLARD
Mr. Ididnt. I have some unfortunate news for you.
THYME
What now?

WILLARD
Your insurance won’t be covering your ectomy.

THYME
Why the hell not?

WILLARD
It’s considered a pre-existing condition.

THYME
What pre-existing condition?

WILLARD
Whatever it is we’re going to remove.

THYME
How can that be? I was healthy as a horse when I walked into this joint.

WILLARD
Whatever it is, you had it before you got here and according to the insurance company, anything you had before you walked into the hospital is a pre-existing condition.

THYME
That’s the craziest...

The bluesy saxophone announces
the pulsating return of Nurse Clavicle

THYME
Well, hello there apple knees.

CLAVICLE
Well, hello there yourself.

WILLARD
Is there something you need, Nurse Clavicle?
CLAVICLE

Well...

WILLARD

Let me rephrase that.

CLAVICLE

There is something I have to tell you, Doctor.

WILLARD

Can’t it wait? Mr. Ididn’t, here, is running out of time.

THYME

(sits up)

Running out of..?

CLAVICLE

(pushing Thyme down)

I’m afraid it can’t wait, Doctor. You see...

WILLARD

Please, not another emergency. I don’t think I have the strength.

THYME

I’m not doing anything.

CLAVICLE

It’s not another emergency. At least not that kind of emergency.

WILLARD

Then, what is it?

CLAVICLE

I just got a text from Amazon about a sale on some darling maternity blouses.

WILLARD

Does that mean you’re..?
THYME
(incredulous)
And you found out from Amazon?

CLAVICLE
Oh yes. Amazon knows everything.

WILLARD
But, why are you telling me this?

THYME
Silly question, Doc.

CLAVICLE
As the father...

WILLARD
Me? The father? That’s impossible.

CLAVICLE
Why is that impossible?

WILLARD
When I signed on as...

THYME
(to Willard)
Why don’t I save us all a lot of time and trouble here.
(to Clavicle)
You and Doctor Libido here have for sometime now been making... to quote the Bard.. the beast with two backs.

CLAVICLE
Beast with two backs?

THYME
Yeah, the beast with two backs. Y’now two person pushups. Getting busy. Getting down. Caulking the tub. Glazing the donut. Completing the puzzle. Sweeping the chimney. Driving Miss Daisy.
CLAVICLE
Ohhhhh.... you mean rotating the tires. Climbing the ladder. Checking the oil. Searching for loose change. Hanging twenty.

THYME
Well, yeah, if you’re gonna graphic about it. You’re convinced that he’s responsible for your present condition. You want him to put a ring on your fourth finger and make an honest woman out of you. Feel free to stop me anytime.

(she doesn’t)
Okay then… Contrary to what you may think, it wasn’t Doctor Erotic here who slipped one past the goalie. His guys haven’t been swimming upstream to spawn since Mother Superior put them in purgatory with the unkindest cut of all. Now, I don’t know what he told you he was… Gynecologist? Podiatrist?

CLAVICLE
Urologist.

THYME
(to Willard)
Urologist??? Why would you tell her you were a urologist? Why would you tell anyone you were a urologist?

(Willard shrugs; Thyme turns back to Helen)
The point is… it wasn’t him and it wasn’t Ramon, or the hunky pool guy or Kevin or Lucky Pierre or even that guy in the front row.

CLAVICLE
I guess that leaves only one person.

The Med Ex Guy comes running through chased by Betsy and Helen.

CLAVICLE
Wait!!! I want to talk to you!

HELEN
Take a number.
Clavicle joins the chase.

THYME
How’d I do?

WILLARD
Best summation I’ve ever heard. You missed your calling Mr. I didn’t. You would have made a very successful shyster.

The Orderlies enter and begin to move Thyme’s bed.

THYME
Where are we going? Where are you taking me?

WILLARD
It’s time for your ectomy. Mr. I didn’t.

THYME
Ectomy?

Dramatic organ chord.

WILLARD
Yes... ectomy.

Dramatic organ chord.

THYME
There’s something I gotta tell ya, Doc.

The Med Ex Guy comes running in pursued by Betsy, Clavicle and Helen.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
May I have your attention please.

Everyone stops in place to listen
It is my sad duty to inform you that at 3:45 this afternoon Dolores Campbell Robinson O'Hara Jackson Goldfarb O'Hara O'Malley O'Shaughnesy Johnson and Johnson Kelly Anderson Harkness Mitchell Turner Price Hargrove was found dead.

THYME
Dead?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Yes, dead. Bit the big one. Gave up the ghost. Cashed in her chips. Circled the drain. Assumed room temperature. Kicked the oxygen habit.

THYME
But how?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
The police suspect natural causes.

THYME
But what about the knives in her back?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Funny you should ask. The Coroner believes the knives found imbedded between Dolores’s third and fourth ribs played no part in her death but were simply pre-existing conditions.

CLAVICLE
Willard, do you know what this means?

WILLARD
Yes. Dolores is dead.

CLAVICLE
Isn’t it wonderful?

WILLARD
Wonderful?

CLAVICLE
Now you’re free to marry me.
HELEN
Marry you? Why would he want to marry you when he can marry me?

CLAVICLE
(strikes a sexy pose)
And what can you do for him, that I can’t do standing still?

THYME
(to Helen)
It looks like the ball is in your court.

HELEN
Can you get him a refund on his taxes?

THYME
Nice return.

BETSY
Why would he want to marry either of you when I can give him everything.

CLAVICLE
There’s just one problem, honey. You don’t have anything.

Clavicle and Helen exchange high fives.

THYME
Great volley.

BETSY
Oh yeah? How about ten million dollars?

THYME
Game, set, match.

BETSY
Well, Willard who is it going to be?

THYME
Hold on... Nobody is marrying anyone. Dolores didn’t die of natural causes.
WILLARD
She didn’t?

THYME
No, she didn’t. Dolores was...
(pregnant pause)
... zoztzed.

Dramatic organ music sting.

ORDERLIES #1 & 2
Zoztzed?

Organ sting.

Zoztzed?

WILLARD
Organ Sting

Zoztzed?

CLAVICLE
Organ sting

Zoztzed?

HELEN
Organ sting.

Zoztzed?

BETSY
Organ sting

THYME
Yes. Zoztzed. Dusted, ghosted, offed, popped, smoked, wasted... whacked.

WILLARD
By all of that... could you possibly mean murdered?
THYME
That’s one way to put it. Less colorful, but you could say that.

WILLARD
Why would you think Dolores was murdered Mr. Ididn’t,

THYME
First of all, my name isn’t Ididn’t.

WILLARD
It isn’t Ididn’t?

THYME
It isn’t Ididn’t.

WILLARD
Then why did you tell me it was Ididn’t?

THYME
I didn’t.

WILLARD
Yes, you did.

THYME
No, I didn’t.

WILLARD
Did

THYME
Didn’t.

WILLARD
Did.

THYME
Thyme.

WILLARD
(cheks his watch)

Four thirty.
THYME
No, no, no. My name is Thyme. I’m a detective. Dolores hired me to find out who was trying to murder her.

BETSY
Mother thought someone was trying to murder her?

THYME
You seem surprised.

BETSY
No, not really.

THYME
We didn’t tell anyone who I was, so we could keep the whole thing under wraps. Didn’t want the perp to know we were looking for him... or her. At least that’s what I wanted Dolores to think.

WILLARD
I don’t understand.

THYME
Dolores told me her last husband died in a tragic backgammon accident.

WILLARD
That’s what she told everybody.

THYME
I never bought it for a minute.

WILLARD
You suspect Dolores of foul play?

THYME
In my experience, when a mug dies in a backgammon accident, nine times out of ten it’s a dame that’s rollin’ the dice.

HELEN
But what about those knives in her back?
THYME
The old stab yourself in the back trick. A device to throw me off the track. Seen it a hundred times.

WILLARD
But that still leaves the question of who zotzed Dolores.

THYME
I did a little nosin’ around while I was layin’ in this hospital bed to see which one of you fit the three M’s.

BETSY
Three M’s?

HELEN
What three M’s?

THYME
Motive... Method... and...

HELEN
And what?

THYME
Uh... Mopportunity.

WILLARD
And what did you find?

THYME
Only one of you hit the trifecta. And it was that person who murdered Dolores Campbell Robinson O'Hara Jackson Goldfarb O'Hara O'Malley O'Shaughnesy Johnson and Johnson Kelly Anderson Harkness Mitchell Turner Price Hargrove.

WILLARD
Well, who was it?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
(dramatically)
Yes. Who was it? Who whacked Dolores Campbell Robinson O'Hara Jackson Goldfarb O'Hara...
Annoyed, they all start mumbling “Yeah, yeah, yeah. “We know... We know... etc”

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Was it Orderly Number One?

Dramatic Organ Music sting.

The Orderlies point at each other trying to figure out which one is Orderly Number One. They finally decide. Orderly #1 strikes a worried pose.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Or Orderly Number Two?

Dramatic Organ Music sting.

Orderly Number Two strikes a fearful pose.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Or, was it Betsy, the neglected daughter with the weak bladder?

Dramatic Organ Music sting.

Betsy strikes a pose holding her knees together.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
How about Nurse Clavicle?

Dramatic Organ Music sting.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
(admiringly)
How about Nurse Clavicle!
Nurse Clavicle strikes a sexy, seductive pose.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Or, could it have been Helen from accounting with a bun in her hair and another in the oven?

Dramatic Organ Music sting.

Helen peers disapprovingly over her glasses..

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Could it be Willard, the only would-be urologist who could sue himself for malpractice?

Dramatic Organ Music sting.

Willard strikes a handsome pose.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
Or....

(pause)
Was it the guy in the front row?

Dramatic organ sting.

Everybody enthusiastically nods in agreement.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE
For the answer to this and other important questions be sure to return for the next dramatic episode of Generic Hospital when we hear Willard say...

WILLARD
Gentlemen, if you’ll strap Mister Thyme to the bed we can begin his ectomy.
The Orderlies strap Thyme to the bed.

THYME
No... No... Not an ectomy!

WILLARD
Relax Mr. Thyme. You’ll be happy to know the ectomy we gave chosen for you is... Drum roll please.

The Orderlies pound out a drum roll on Thyme’s bed.

WILLARD
A... “vas!”.

Game Show type organ sting.

As Willard and the Orderlies start to wheel Thyme off stage.

THYME
(confused)
A vas?

Thyme, Willard and The Orderlies exit.

THYME (OFFSTAGE)
A vas!!!!????

BETSY
(to Med Ex Guy)
Hey, maybe you should get one of those.

The Med Ex Guy laughs, puts his arms around Betsy, Clavicle and Helen. They all exit laughing.
After a moment or two we hear...

THYME (OFFSTAGE)
Noooooooooooo!!!!!!!
BLACKOUT

LIGHTS UP on Thyme’s office.
Thyme is slumped over his desk, sound asleep, crying out.

THYME
(having a nightmare)
No... No... No....

Effie undulates in, crosses to Thyme and...

EFFIE

Boss... Boss...

THYME
No... No...

EFFIE
(shakes him)
Boss...

THYME
(in his sleep)
Put down that knife.

EFFIE

Boss...

THYME
(realizing where he is)
Oh... I was having a nightmare. Someone was going to cut off my...

EFFIE

Cut off your what?

THYME

Never mind.
EFFIE
Well, pull yourself together. There’s a woman outside wants to see you.

THYME
Tell her I’m outta town... Tell her I died... Tell her...

Dolores enters just as she did at the beginning of the play.

DOLORES
Mr. Thyme?

They all turn to the audience and freeze as The Narrator pops in.

NARRATOR
Do do do do... Do do do do. Do do do do... Do do do do.

LIGHTS DOWN

THE END