

NURSERY CRIMES - (EXCERPTS)

AT RISE:

SCENE 2: DETECTIVE WINKIE'S OFFICE, MORNING

The inside of a detective's office. A desk with paper strewn all over it; an empty bottle of whisky and a half empty glass. WINKIE, still wearing his customary 'Wee Willie Winkie' night hat, is asleep face down on the desk.

The phone rings. He reaches out a hand and slams the phone back into the receiver. Groaning, he lifts his head, replaces the night hat with a trilby, and drains what's left in the glass.

WINKIE

(To audience)

Banbury Cross, 1937. The name? William Winkie, 'Detective'. Formerly known as 'Wee Willie' but that was before I grew. I could tell it was going to be one of those days. The kind of day that could only be made right by pretty maids all in a row, and more whisky. The wind was blowing hard enough to rock a cradle from a treetop, and I had three bags full of misery.

GOLDIE LOCKS, a smart-talking and no-nonsense journalist, throws open the office door and marches in.

Winkie jumps.

GOLDIE

William, there you are... Oh, sorry did I scare you?

DETECTIVE WINKIE

(To audience)

Goldie Locks. A smart-talking journalist, whose fame in Banbury Cross was secured after an exposé on three anthropomorphic bears living on the outskirts of the village.

Goldie sniffs the air.

GOLDIE

You've been drinking.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

(To audience)

She knew me better than anyone else.

GOLDIE

I thought we should go over what you've got so far.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

(To audience)

I'd been in love with her since the moment I met her. Her hair was golden blonde, with a little curl right in the middle of her forehead. Curly upstairs, and down...-

GOLDIE

(Interrupting)

...Detective? I wondered if you'd started seeking out suspects and mulling over motives yet?

DETECTIVE WINKIE

I beg your pardon?

GOLDIE

I'd like to see your list of likely libertines, please.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

List of what?

GOLDIE

Come on, William. There's no time to lose! We need to get on this now.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Where's the fire, Goldie? Not London Bridge again.

Goldie stops and scrutinises Winkie, who is kicking back in his chair with no sense of urgency whatsoever.

GOLDIE

You haven't heard, have you?

Winkie shrugs vaguely.

GOLDIE

Detective, Humpty's dead!
 (To Conductor)
 Bell note.

3. CRACK THIS CASE

GOLDIE

WINKIE, STOP WHAT YOU'RE DOING
 YOU WON'T BELIEVE WHAT I'VE SEEN
 THERE'S BEEN A MURDER IN RHYMELAND
 THE FIRST THERE'S EVER BEEN
 WINKIE, ALL THE KING'S HORSES
 TO THE BORDER THEY RACED
 THEY SUSPECT 'FOWL' PLAY
 YOU NEED TO CRACK THIS CASE

DETECTIVE WINKIE

GOLDIE, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

GOLDIE

EXACTLY WHAT I JUST SAID
 THE KING'S MEN JUST FOUND HUMPTY... DEAD!
 ALL THE TOWN IS IN DANGER
 THE MURDERER IS AT LARGE
 THE KILLER MUST BE STOPPED AND, WINKIE, YOU'RE IN CHARGE

*The Company enters wearing trench coats
 and carrying magnifying glasses.*

GOLDIE & COMPANY

WINKIE, STOP WHAT YOU'RE DOING
 YOU WON'T BELIEVE WHAT WE'VE SEEN
 THERE'S BEEN A MURDER IN RHYMELAND
 THE FIRST THERE'S EVER BEEN

WINKIE, ALL THE KING'S HORSES
 TO THE BORDER THEY RACED
 THEY SUSPECT 'FOWL' PLAY
 WE NEED TO CRACK THIS CASE

IT'S OVER TO YOU NOW TO SOLVE IT
 WHO TURNED HUMPTY TO OMELETTE?
 YOU WANTED A TASK
 WELL, YOU GOT WHAT YOU ASKED
 FIND THE CULPRIT

WINKIE, CAN YOU HELP US?
 WE ARE RUNNING OUT OF TIME
 WHO COULD HAVE DONE THIS NURSERY CRIME?
 EVERYBODY'S SHELLSHOCKED

THERE IS NO TIME LEFT TO WASTE
YOU'RE THE ONE DETECTIVE...

DETECTIVE WINKIE

I'M THE ONE DETECTIVE...

COMPANY

YOU'RE THE ONE DETECTIVE WHO CAN CRACK THIS CASE!

The Company exit.

GOLDIE

(Scribbling in her notebook)

"Officers are working around the hickory-dickory-dock collecting witness statements from several hundred of the King's men, who tried heroically to put Humpty back together again. Sadly, to no avail."

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Poor fellow. So no suggestion of a "smash and grab" then Goldie?

He waits for laughter that never comes.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Goldie??

Still nothing.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

So who's investigating the Dumpty case, anyway.

GOLDIE

Uh... you are...?!

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Me?!

GOLDIE

Well, yes! You are the Detective, are you not?

DETECTIVE WINKIE

The sign on the door says I am...
It's a case! An actual case! What do I do? How do I do it?

(To Goldie)

Can't you do it for me?

A silhouette of a woman appears at the door. There is a knock and BO enters with her pet lamb, which she keeps on a lead and walks like a pure-breed Crufts finalist. Winkie's jaw drops open.

BO

Can I come inside?

DETECTIVE WINKIE

(To audience)

I wanted to ask her the same question.

She crosses over to the desk.

BO

Mr. Winkie? I heard you were an independent Detective?

DETECTIVE WINKIE

I prefer Private Dick.

BO

Me too. Later maybe. First, I need your help..

DETECTIVE WINKIE

(To audience)

I'll be honest with you; she could have asked me if I were the Muffin Man and I would have said yes. I had just wrapped up a month of investigating jam tart thefts and anthropomorphic bears, so before she could say another word I had already decided to take the case.

BO

I'm sure you've read this morning's paper and heard about the death of Mr. Dumpty?

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Ah yes, poor Humpty. Of course I've heard. Who hasn't? I'm not deaf.

BO

Of course.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

What's that?

BO

I said "of course."

GOLDIE

(To Bo)

How can we help you?

BO

Oh, Goldie. I hadn't noticed you there. Nice... scarf.

GOLDIE

(Cordial)

Thank you. Nice... bonnet.

BO

I came for the Detective. I have a hunch...

Winkie and Goldie surreptitiously lean behind to inspect Bo's back.

BO

Well, more of an inkling really...

They transfer their scrutiny to the floor beneath Bo.

BO

A gut feeling that Mr. Wolf might be involved.

GOLDIE

Mr. Wolf?

BO

Well, I'm not one to dish the dirt, but...

(Meaningful stare)

He's back in town after his business trip to Gloucester.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

What's that got to do with anything?

BO

Well, apparently some Doctor drowned in a puddle while Wolf was visiting, and they think the circumstances were unusual.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Ah. Poor guy. Is that it?

GOLDIE

Winkie. Doesn't it strike you as a bit of a coincidence that the morning after Wolf returns, another Nursery Rhyme character is found dead?

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Ah yes, what rotten luck!

BO

Listen...

Winkie leans in close

BO

He'll be at the club tonight...

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Got it.

He nods, then stares at her blankly.

BO

(Patient)

Perhaps it would be a good idea to go there?

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Do go on.

BO

(Less patient)

Maybe you'd be interested in joining his poker table at the club? Ask him a few questions?

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Not really, no. I've always been more of a 'Cluedo' man, myself.

Goldie pulls Winkie to one side.

GOLDIE

Winkie, this could be important and you're already ballsing it all up. Are you up to the job, or not? I know it's a tall ask...-

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Low blow.

GOLDIE

...But I can help you.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Why would you do that?

GOLDIE

If you promise me dibs on any developments or dirt, I'll prop you up and basically carry you through your entire investigation.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

You reckon you're that good, do you?

GOLDIE

Yes.

Bo calls over to him.

BO

(Seductive)

Detective Winkie?

Winkie looks at her, then back at Goldie.

GOLDIE

(Professional)

Detective Winkie?

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Deal.

(To Bo)

Shall we?

Bo desperately clings to Winkie's collar.

BO

You must understand Detective, if he knew I were here he'd huff and he'd puff, and I'd be out on the streets!

(Closer)

This needs to be our little secret, Detective.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Of course.

He walks over to the hat stand.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

I'm always discreet.

Winkie pulls off trench coat and the whole stand comes crashing down. As he tries to catch it, he trips, knocking stuff off the table. He staggers backwards into Goldie, and lands face first in Bo's cleavage.

BO

(Gasps)

Detective!

DETECTIVE WINKIE

So sorry. Listen, you both go on ahead and I'll get myself straight. I'll meet you at the bar...

There's a loud "baa" from Bo's lamb.

GOLDIE

Well, OK. We'll see you there.

They both exit.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

(To audience)

It was the case I'd been waiting for. A high-profile homicide like this could make me famous in this town! I never thought this day would come. Even in my wildest dreams on the wettest nights... Or, is that my wettest dreams on the wildest nights? Doubt crept in like Georgie Porgie into an all-girls' school.

4. THURSDAY'S CHILD

DETECTIVE WINKIE

I CAN'T DO MY JOB
CAN'T PUT DOWN THE BOOZE
WHEN ANYTHING GETS HEAVY I JUST SING THE BLUES
I'M AN ORDINARY JOE
BUT THURSDAY'S CHILD HAS FAR TO GO

DON'T LET DOWN MY GUARD
I CAN'T GET THE GIRL
THE ONE THAT I AM MAD FOR WITH THE GOLDEN CURL
I CAN'T LET MY FEELINGS SHOW
'COZ THURSDAY'S CHILD HAS FAR TO GO

NEAR-TO-ZERO CRIME RATE, THIS HAS BEEN AN EASY JOB
 WITH NOTHING GOING ON HERE IT WAS PERFECT FOR A SLOB
 BUT NOW THERE'S BEEN A MURDER, MY PLAN IS GETTING FLAWED
 THEY'LL SOON FIGURE OUT I'M A FRAUD

I LAZE IN MY NIGHTGOWN
 I SLEEP UNTIL NOON
 IT'S TAKEN ME SO LONG THE COW'S JUMPED OVER THE MOON
 TIME IS TICKING SLOW
 BUT THURSDAY'S CHILD HAS FAR TO GO

LIFE AS RHYMELAND'S LAUGHING STOCK HAS NOW BECOME A BORE
 THEY THINK THAT I AM USELESS, WELL I'M NOT ANYMORE
 I WILL SHOW THIS TWO-BIT TOWN JUST WHAT I CAN DO
 WINKIE IS GONNA COME THROUGH!

I WILL GET THE GIRL
 MY RHYME IS MY OWN
 NOT EVERYBODY'S STORY MUST BE WRITTEN IN STONE
 WEDNESDAY'S CHILD IS FULL OF WOE
 BUT THAT'S NOT ME, OH NO!
 I'M THURSDAY'S CHILD
 I'M THURSDAY'S CHILD
 AND JUST WATCH HOW FAR I'LL GO

EXCERPT 2

SCENE 4: THE DISH AND SPOON CLUB

The curtains open to reveal the swanky interior of a 1930's club. Winkie arrives at the Bar and is beckoned over by Goldie, now in a fabulous new outfit. Various characters sitting in booths.

GOLDIE

There you are William, just in time.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

For what?

GOLDIE

Bo's about to try a number on us.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

When did you have time to find new clothes?

GOLDIE

Oh, a three minute song is plenty of time for a costume change. I took the liberty of ordering you a drink.

'GINGE' brings over some drinks.

GINGE

'Ere we go. Whisky and soda, soda on the side...

He places the drinks in front of Winkie.

GINGE

And another whisky and soda, whisky on the side.

He places the other drinks in front of Goldie.

GINGE

We've also got an offer on baked goods this evening. Buy any two hot cross buns and get my muffins for free. Enjoy the show!

Ginge picks up a tray of buns and walks away, as Winkie and Goldie cheers.

(Drum roll)

MS. HUBBARD (60's, glamorous), approaches the microphone on the stage area.

MS. HUBBARD

Ladies & Gentlemen, welcome to the Dish and Spoon! We have drinks flowing, showgirls showing, we have Ginge's freshly baked hot cross buns a'doughing...

MISSY MUFFET makes a clumsy beeline for the buns.

MS. HUBBARD

Whoops, you alright there Missy? Good maid. Where was I? Ah yes, and we have... uh... well that's about it really. The curtains are quite nice, I suppose? Anyway, it is my pleasure to welcome to the stage my beautiful daughter and her flock - Little Bo & The Peeps!

Applause

Bo and The Peeps make their way onto the club stage.

5.OFFAL

THE PEEPS

BA BA, BAA BA
 BA BA DA BA BA DA
 BA BA, BAA BA BA!

BO

YOU MAY THINK THAT I AM MUTTON
 BUT YOU CAN ALWAYS PUSH MY BUTTON
 LIL BO'S PEEP SHOW

BO & THE PEEPS

LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFFAL

BO

LITTLE BOY BLUE FELL ASLEEP
 LOST A HERD OF THIRTY SHEEP
 IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE ME WEEP

BO & THE PEEPS

LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFFAL

BO

ONCE I HAD A LITTLE SKIRT WITH A SPLIT RIGHT UP THE SIDE
 BUT EVERYWHERE THAT I WENT, THE BOYS COULD SEE MY THIGHS
 THEN I HAD ANOTHER SKIRT WITH A SPLIT RIGHT UP THE FRONT
 BUT WHEN I WALKED, THE BOYS ALL TALKED
 'COZ THEY COULD SEE MY... - *COME ON GIRLS!*

((DANCE BREAK))

BO

BIG BAD WOLF SEEMS SUCH A BULLY
 HUFFS AND PUFFS, BUT SURELY
 UNDERNEATH HE'S WARM AND WOOLLY

BO & THE PEEPS

LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFFAL

BO

HICKORY DICKORY, DICKORY DOCK (TICK TOCK!)
 THE MOUSE RAN UP THE CLOCK
 I HAVE GOT A MASSIVE FLOCK

BO & THE PEEPS

LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFFAL
 LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING...

BO

OOH, YOU'RE OFFAL!

The audience claps and Bo steps down off the stage area and heads over to Winkie and Goldie.

BO

You came.

GOLDIE

Well done. That was very energetic.

BO

Thank you. Have you found anything out yet about Humpty's death?

GOLDIE

Well I'm afraid we're not able to...-

BO

...It's just that the girls have been talking non-stop about it. They're saying that with too many suspects and not enough leads, Old King Cole has decreed a mass debate necessary.

WINKIE

Well, I'd say that's always necessary.

BO

Quite! The Three Little Pigs have fled over the hills and a long way off, but don't say I told you. Apparently they'd been trying to get planning permission for a house of sticks on Humpty's land. But you didn't hear that from me.

GOLDIE

Interesting...

BO

And just last week someone was going around disguised teapot, chasing people. Still no clue as to who it was, mind, but apparently people saw a woman with bonny brown hair fleeing the scene.

GOLDIE

I see...

BO

Then, of course, there's Tom. You know, the Piper's son? Now don't say I told you but apparently he stole a pig and tried to drown a kitten in a well! Not at all above pushing an egg if you ask me.

GOLDIE

We didn't. But go on.

BO

Well, we all know Little Boy Blue. Apparently he set free a rogue goose that's been throwing people down the stairs. It could have easily gotten Humpty by the left leg and -

GOLDIE

Thanks Bo, I think that's plenty for now. Please tell your boss we'd like to speak to him?

Bo gestures over to Ginge, who comes over with two cocktails.

BO

Of course. In the meantime please enjoy these complimentary cocktails.

GOLDIE

Oh, no that's quite alright.

BO

I insist! It's made from magic beans, not too sweet. I think you'll find it's *just right*.

She nods seductively and walks away, taking Ginge's arm.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Goldie, do you really think we'll get answers in this place?

GOLDIE

Of course. Everyone's here - plenty of opportunities to ask some questions! There's Ms. Hubbard, she used to live in the Big Shoe...

DETECTIVE WINKIE

Ah yes, had so many kids she didn't know *what* to do.

GOLDIE

Quite! Ate her out of house and home, she could barely afford food. I dread to think what happened to the little dog.

DETECTIVE WINKIE

She seems to be doing alright for herself now.

GOLDIE

Well, the story goes she had some mysterious benefactor. Not that mysterious mind, it wouldn't take a Detective to guess that Wolf is probably keeping Hubbard close in order to stay close to Bo.

She gestures behind her where Wolf, Hubbard, and Bo are deep in conversation. Winkie cranes his neck to see.

DETECTIVE WINKIE
Oh really? Well, well. Who knew!

GOLDIE
Literally everybody.

DETECTIVE WINKIE
Ah. What about him, who's that?

As if on cue, Wolf turns around.

MR. WOLF
Good evening, Detective. Miss Locks...

He kisses GOLDIE's hand

MR. WOLF
Welcome to the Dish 'n' Spoon.

DETECTIVE WINKIE
(To audience)
I didn't like his face. Then when he introduced himself...

MR. WOLF
I'm Mr. Wolf.

DETECTIVE WINKIE
... I didn't like his name either.

GOLDIE
Mr. Wolf. I suppose you've heard the news of Dumpty's death?

MR. WOLF
I did, poor fellow. Right before Easter, too.

He edges the cocktail toward Goldie

MR. WOLF
A sad loss for Banbury Cross.

GOLDIE
(Taking a sip of the cocktail)
I was wondering if you wouldn't mind... Oh, that really is good.

(Drains the rest)

What was I...?

Wolf leans over the next table and snatches another cocktail from Hilary mid sip. He quickly places it in front of Goldie, who promptly necks it.

MR. WOLF

Now, if you'll excuse me I have to... Uh... "See a white lady about a white horse..."

He walks off.