

THE BASEMENT

a comedy thriller in one act

by Ashley Nader

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Characters:

Mark Thatcher – middle aged, corrupt lawyer.

Carol Thatcher – middle aged, Mark's wife

David – The maid's boyfriend, 20's – 30's

Scene: An upmarket house. Carol is seated with a cocktail. Mark enters through the front door and puts his wallet, phone and keys down on the table.

Carol: It's about time you got home.

Mark: I was working late.

Carol: I've heard that one before.

Mark: I Haven't even taken my jacket off and you already want to start on me. Can we just try and get on as though we are happy?

Carol: Happiness is a privilege; it's not a right. You lost any form of happiness when you threw everything away.

Mark: I can't do this anymore with you, it's too much. You want to constantly blame me for all of this. Go ahead, I won't play your mind games.

Carol: You want to talk about games! You are the master and I am just one of the pieces that got caught in all of this so-called game.

Mark: Don't act so high and mighty, as though you're the innocent one who got caught up in all of this. We're both to blame for all of this and either way, anything we do, we will both be at fault.

Carol: My lawyer says differently.

Mark: Don't make me laugh. You mean your "Uncle Francis." The only bar he's known for the last ten years is the one he rests his vodka bottle on.

Carol: You may joke and sneer, but this is serious. The walls are closing in on us and soon we will have to face what has happened.

Mark: Getting morbid aren't you? Maybe you should get a refill of those anti depressants, or stop drinking in the morning.

Carol: Well considering I have nothing else to live for my drinking is the only thing that gets me out of bed. I cooked dinner. It's in the microwave.

Mark: You cooked? I thought I smelt something vile.

Carol: It's the smell from the basement. It keeps getting worse everyday.

Mark: The contractors will be here tomorrow to seal up the basement.

Carol: We need to go down there and get rid of that body. It's haunting me.

Mark: Leave the ideas and planning up to me, you just focus on what you do best, drinking and knocking back pills.

Carol: I ran out of brandy, so I cooked your favourite.

Mark: I don't trust your cooking. Every time you cook I end up in the emergency room.

Carol: All by accident, I assure you!

Mark: Accident my ass! How do you confuse "Spray n' Cook" with a can of "Doom"?

Carol: The cans look similar.

Mark: I would rather starve to be honest.

Carol: Suit yourself, but if I really wanted you gone I would have done it by now. It wouldn't be an accident. It would be planned down to the last detail.

Mark: I see you've been giving it some thought.

Carol: Well a girl has to fend for herself and think of her future especially when she has no one to count on.

Mark: Spare me the dramatics. Your career ended ages ago. No need to drag up the past and those lousy acting skills of yours.

Carol: Well I would be a star and living a life of hope if you hadn't crushed my dreams and put yours first, like everything else.

Mark: Shame poor baby, you didn't seem to mind when the cash was flowing in and you had a choice of five different credit cards to choose from. Funny how your memory is selective.

Carol: My memory may be shaky at times, yet I still know what being faithful is and will stick to our marriage vows. Better or worse.

Mark: Wow, this Mother Theresa act is getting old. I have done everything to prove to you that I loved you and what happened was a moment of weakness.

Carol: I have been tempted many times yet I still stayed faithful even if having sex with you was like having a dying fish on top of me.

Mark: Well least I keep my downstairs area clean. Sleeping with you is like having sex with a bakery; your yeast infection could keep Albany in business for a month.

Carol: That was one time. I'm sorry, you're one to talk with your cock smelling like bad cheese.

Mark: Rubbish.

Carol: Oh really. You have so much cheese around your foreskin you could have a wine and cracker evening.

Mark: Whatever. No wonder I slept with someone else. This right here, your childish attitude, you can never let anything be put to rest.

Carol: Believe what you want, you will anyway.

Mark: Can you at least face me, what are you looking at?

Carol: Him. He is still out there. He is just waiting for us to make one mistake.

Mark: Don't be ridiculous.

Carol: He knows, he sits there everyday with his bottle of malt liquor staring at this house waiting for us to make a mistake. He knows.

Mark: He knows dick.

Carol: We stole his dreams and life and now he is waiting for the perfect moment to take ours.

Mark: See what happens when you begin to sober up. You make more sense as a drunken, pill-popping shrew.

Carol: Mark my words. As long as that body stays in this house we're doomed. One wrong foot and everything that we have worked so hard to cover up will come crashing down.

Mark: You carry on anymore and I might end up joining her downstairs, least she is getting some peace and quiet.

Carol: I don't think I will ever get you. You are a riddle wrapped in confusion dipped in cockiness

Mark: I thought you liked my cock

Carol: When will you learn to grow up? For once, please be serious.

Mark: How can I be serious? Look around you, it's all one fucked up joke. Murphy is watching us on a big screen laughing his ass off. We have a hobo ready to crack and kill us at any point. You are one step from killing me, if that doesn't work your cooking will end me off. You're drinking so much you make Betty Ford look like a nun. We have a dead body downstairs rotting away, so that even the roaches are coming up for air.

Carol: What happened to the good old days when you were faithful and we loved each other? I don't know how we got to this point.

Mark: Well don't blame yourself, things just happened.

Carol: I blame you! If you weren't sticking it to our maid she wouldn't have ended up dead, down in the basement for the rats to feed on.

Mark: I blame your temper, "Miss Fatal Attraction"

Carol: Pardon me, for still loving you and that seeing you together sent me into a fit of rage.

Mark: I'm sure that rage was meant for me.

Carol: It was and still is, you will get what is coming to you when the time is right.

Mark: Please, so killing her was just an appetizer until you get to the main course.

Carol: I have my reasons, she deserved every bit. I took her in and treated her like my daughter; even her boyfriend was welcomed anytime. I should have seen the signs.

Mark: Well they do say, "Love is blind."

Carol: Or plain ignorant.

Mark: Either way, the damage is done, we just need to lay low for a little bit longer until the contractors arrive and then everything will be all right.

Carol: What if the contractors suspect something I mean that smell is putrid. What if they turn us in?

Mark: They won't, they're special contractors that deal with any problems that need taking care of.

Carol: I don't like the sound of that.

Mark: It's a connection through a client of mine. I scratched his back and in return he scratched mine.

Carol: Let me guess, you covered up his coke habit, or quitted his whore's during his divorce settlement, or did a bit of bribery to get rid of those speeding tickets or those drunk and driving demeanors.

Mark: What can I say "I'm Mark Thatcher" - best lawyer in town. It's good to know people in high places.

Carol: Corrupt places.

Mark: You never had a problem, when we were living the high life, taking drugs and drinking fine champagne, driving the latest cars and eating at the finest restaurants, when you knew well that it was all bribery and corruption.

Carol: Exactly Mark, all bad deeds have a trail. Why do you think I am so worried? The police have slowly caught upto all the bad things that have mysteriously disappeared through the cracks over the years. One false move and all will be exposed.

Mark: No one will squeal on me. I've got too much dirt on everyone. No one would dare.

Carol: I hope you're right. The pigs aren't stupid, they know you're guilty of all those crimes that have been quietly swept under the rug for all your clients. They just can't prove it yet.

Mark: Yet, never my dear.

Carol: You see that cockiness springs up again and there is no way of talking to you. They are not backing down. They have increased the reward money up to a quarter of a million to anyone that can come forward and provide evidence. They mean business.

Mark: Let them try they have nothing. Damn swines - why don't they leave me alone and just focus on their donuts.

Carol: I would still feel better if we got rid of the body.

Mark: You are driving me crazy. You know what! I'm going to get you your Brandy and a handful of pills to knock it back with, otherwise there might be two bodies in the basement. I'll be back in five minutes. Maybe pick up something to eat and you can have what's in the microwave.

Carol: (Looks out the window) Mark! He's gone!

Mark: What?

Carol: David's gone!

Mark: So, probably gone to piss on a park bench or sleep in a bush or fill up on his malt liquor. Stop stressing. You giving me a ball ache.

