THE BASEMENT

A COMEDY THRILLER IN ONE ACT

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(HAVE THE CURTAINS OPEN TO THE FIRE PLACE, THE ONLY THING ON STAGE. CAROL THEN COMES ON STAGE WITH A BOX OR CRATE AND PLACES THE ART, PHOTO'S OR FRAMES ON THE MANTEL, LOOKING AND REMINISING AT PHOTOS AND MEMORIES.

MARK CAN THEN ENTER A MINUTE AFTER CAROL IS ON STAGE AND PLACES A BLANKET IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STAGE WITH A BOTTLE OF WINE AND TWO GLASSES.

WHILE SHE IS UNPACKING HE CAN COME UP BEHIND HER AND PUT HIS ARMS AROUND HER AND SHOWS AFFECTION AND LOVE.

THEY SHOULD BE DRESSED VERY CASUAL AS THEY ARE MOVING INTO THERE NEW HOUSE.)

CAROL THEN TURNS AROUND AND SEES THE EFFORT MARK HAS MADE AND SAYS)

CAROL: I have a special surprise for you
(*GOES OFF STAGE AND BRINGS A PICNIC BASKET AND PLACES IT ON THE BLANKET WHERE MARK IS OPENING THE WINE*).

MARK: What's this?

CAROL: Have a look.

MARK: This is incredible, where did you learn to make all of this?

CAROL: I called your mom and made time to see her and she shared the family recipes with me and showed me how to prepare your favourite foods.

MARK: I'm impressed, you see we'll make a housewife out you yet.

CAROL: I don't know about that, lets take baby steps and see where we get to.

(*MARK HAS THE WINE POURED ALREADY AND GIVES CAROL A GLASS AND THEY HAVE A TOAST*)

MARK: Here's to our first house and all the wonderful memories we are going to share.

CAROL: Amazing, our own little piece of paradise to do what we want with.

MARK: A blank canvas to do what we want. Well more you then me. Any further ideas?

CAROL: The basement, I am not sure yet. It does need a good cleaning that's for sure. A fresh coat of paint with some nice chairs and a few lamps, it will look beautiful.
The one room can be turned into a guest room for when we have family or friends over and the other can be . . .

MARK: A nursery

CAROL: Putting the cart way before the horse. I still need my test results from my gynae/ gynecologist. I don't want to disappoint you. I know marriages that have ended in disaster because the wife can not reproduce.

MARK: Even if we can't have any children, it doesn't mean we still can't practice for the rest of our lives.
(*MARK KISSES CAROL AND THEY BEGIN TO SPREAD OUT ONTO THE BLANKET TO MAKE LOVE*)

(*LIGHTS DIM TO SHOW END OF SCENE*)

(THE NEXT SCENE HAS ANOTHER PIECE OF FURNITURE COME ON, THE COUCH.
CAROL IS STANDING BY THE COUCH RUNNING THROUGH HER LINES FOR AN ADVERT.)

CAROL: "That's why my family uses Colonfresh Toothpaste, Mom's know best". "Mom's Know best" "Mom's know best" "Mom's know best".

(*MARK ARRIVES HOME FROM WORK, AFTER A FRUSTRATING DAY)*

MARK: Hey I'm home.

CAROL: Good day?

MARK: It was ridiculous, I have become everyone's errand boy, fetching lunch, coffee orders even bringing people there cars from the parking lot.

CAROL: It will get better you're just serving your time in the trenches. One day we will look back at this moment and laugh when you're a big shot and some intern is running around getting you coffee.

MARK: I guess so, that day can't come soon enough. How was your day?

CAROL: (*SARCASM*)Thrilling, have been rehearsing my lines for a new toothpaste "Colonfresh" because "Mom's know best". (Normal voice) I then went back to the gynae for more blood tests they needed to recheck something.

MARK: (*THEY ARE NOW SITTING ON THE COUCH, HER LEGS CAN BE DRAPED OVER HIM AS LONG AS IT SHOWS INTIMACY, HE TURNS HER FACE WITH HIS HAND AND LOOKS HER IN THE EYE.*)
No matter what happens I will always love you.

CAROL: I love you more.
(*THEY BEGIN TO KISS AND START GETTING INTIMATE ON THE COUCH AND START MAKING LOVE*)

(*LIGHTS DIM TO SHOW END OF SCENE*)
(WHILE LIGHTS ARE OUT THE NEXT PIECE OF FURNITURE THAT COMES IS THE TABLE. MARK IS SITTING AT THE TABLE, THE TABLE SHOULD BE SET AS THOUGH THEY HAVE JUST FINISHED DINNER.)
(LIGHTS COME ON)

MARK: (*TALKS TO THE WINGS AS CAROL IS OFF STAGE)*I cannot eat another bite, you have out done yourself.

CAROL: (SHE COMES BACK ON STAGE WITH A GIFT BAG)I agree no more food. This is for you.

Mark: What did I forget this time. I'm sorry I'll get you something tomorrow.

CAROL: You haven't forgotten anything.

MARK: (*HE LOOKS IN THE GIFT BAG AND PULLS OUT A PHOTO FRAME*)

CAROL: (*CAROL COMES BEHIND MARK WHIL HE IS LOOKING ATHE FRAME*)
Say hello to our son!

(MARK GETS EMOTIONAL, TAKES THE PHOTO FRAME AND PLACES IT PROUDLY ON THE MANTLE PIECE. TAKES CAROL AND HUGS HER AND THEY BEGIN TO SWAY AND SHARE THE MOMENT.)
(LIGHTS DIM TO SHOW END OF SCENE)

(NEW SCENE)
(AS LIGHTS COME UP THERE IS A SHOE BOX ON THE COFFEE TABLE OR DINING TABLE. CAROL COMES ON STAGE LOOKING AWFUL WITH A PLASTIC BAG. SHE PUTS THE PLASTIC BAG NEXT TO THE SHOE BOX AND GRABS THE PHOTO FRAME FROM THE MANTLE AND TAKES IT TO THE SHOE BOX AND PLASTIC BAG. SHE WALKS IN PAIN. SHE SITS DOWN AND LOOKS AT THE PHOTO FRAME AND BEGINS TO CRY. SHE THEN GOES TO THE SHOE BOX AND TAKES THE PREGNANCY TEST, BABY BLANKET, BABY GROWTH OR ANY LITTLE MEMORIES. AS SHE IS CRYING, SHE START THROWING ALL THE STUFF IN THE SHOE BOX INTO THE PLASTIC BAG. SHE UNDOES THE PHOTO FRAME AND REMOVES THE SCAN AND TEARS IT UP AND PUTS IT IN THE BAG).
SHE GRABS HER CELLPHONE AND TRIES TO PHONE HIM AND GETS NO RESPONSE SHE PHONES THE HOTEL AND SPEAK TO THE CLERK.)

CAROL: Oh good morning I forgot the time difference, please can you put me through to the room of MR. Thatcher it's his wife speaking. . . will you please tell him to phone me as soon as they have a break from their conference.
(*SHE HANGS UP THE PHONE. SHE POURS HERSELF A STIFF DRINK A KNOCKS IT BACK AND PHONES MARK ON HIS CELLPHONE AND IT GOES TO VOICE MAIL. SHE SCREAMS INTO THE RECEIVER*.)
You're never here! (SHE THROWS HER PHONE, GRABS THE BABY BLANKET FROM THE PLASTIC BAG AND HOLDS IT TO HER CHEST AND STARTS CRYING, SHE GOES INTO THE FETAL POSITION ON THE COUCH AND CONTINUES CRYING)
(LIGHTS DIM TO SHOW END OF SCENE)

ENTER MARK

CAROL:

It's about time you got home.

In the kitchen

Mark:

I was working late. (*PUTS BRIEFCASE DOWN ON DINING ROOM*

TABLE WITH A BUNCH OF KEYS)

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?

(TAKES JACKET OFF, ONTO COAT STAND)

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. (MOVE TO LIVING ROOM AREA – WANDER AROUND, GLASS OF WINE IN HAND…)

CAROL:

You want to talk about games, you are the master and I am just one of the pieces that got caught in all 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, *(MARK PICKS UP ANTIDEPRESSANTS FROM SIDEBOARD AND CHUCKS TO CAROL, CAROL CATCHES AND PUTS ON DINING ROOM TABLE)* or stop drinking in the morning.

CAROL:

Well considering I have nothing else to live for, my drinking *(GLASS OF WINE)* 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 every day. *(POINTS TO BASEMENT DOOR)*

MARK:

(BANGS DOOR CLOSED)

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.

(MARK SHAKES THE PILL CONTAINER FOUND ON DINING ROOM TABLE)

CAROL:

I ran out of brandy *(HOLD UP EMPTY BRANDY BOTTLE)* so I cooked your favourite.

(MARK POURS A DRINK OF WHISKEY FROM SIDEBOARD)

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've 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 must fend for herself and think of her future, especially when she has no one to count on.

(MARK WALKING AROUND WITH A DRINK IN HAND)

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 *(PLAYS WITH LIPS)* you didn't seem to mind when the cash was flowing in and you had five different credit cards to choose from. Funny how your memory is selective.

CAROL:

My memory may be shaky at times, but I still know what being faithful is and will stick to our marriage vows. For 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.

(MARK STARTS WALKING TOWARDS THE KITCHEN)

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.

(MARK CHUCKS A LOAF OF ALBANY BREAD AT CAROL) (SHOCKED, CAROL BACKTRACKS)

CAROL:

That was one time. *(PLACES BREAD BACK IN KITCHEN)* I'm sorry, you're one to talk with your cock smelling like bad cheese.

(STARTS WALKING TOWARDS THE DINING ROOM AREA)

MARK:

Rubbish.

CAROL:

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

(LIFTS WINE BOTTLE WITH CRACKERS FROM DINING TABLE AND SHAKES THEM IN FRONT OF MARK)

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.

(WALKS BACK TO THE KITCHEN AND STARES OUT OF THE WINDOW)

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 every day 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, if that body stays in this house we’re doomed. *(REFER TO BASEMENT DOOR)* One wrong move 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

(REFER TO BASEMENT DOOR), at 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 *(RUB AND ADJUST CROTCH)*

CAROL:

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

MARK:

How can I be serious? *(BANGS DRINK ON TABLE)* 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. *(REFER TO KITCHEN WINDOW)* 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, 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? *(SIT DOWN ON DINING ROOM CHAIR*) I don't know how we got to this point. *(HOLD HEAD IN HANDS, DESPONDENT)*

MARK:

Well don’t blame yourself, things just happened.

CAROL:

(BURST OUT)

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.