

INT. BASEMENT - EVENING

A naked lightbulb sparks to life. It dangles from the ceiling of a basement.

Light, quick footsteps as ANNA CROWE moves down the stairs.

Anna is the rare combination of beauty and innocence. She stands in the chilly basement in an elegant summer dress that outlines her slender body. Her gentle eyes move across the empty room and come to rest on a rack of wine bottles covering one entire wall.

She walks to the bottles. Her fingertips slide over the labels.

She stops when she finds just the right one. A tiny smile as she slides it out.

Anna turns to leave. Stops. She stares at the shadowy basement.

It's an unsettling place. She stands very still and watches her breath form a tiny cloud in the air. She's visibly uncomfortable.

Anna Crowe moves for the staircase in a hurry. Each step faster than the next. She climbs out of the basement in another burst of light, quick footsteps.

Click of the light switch.

The lightbulb dies. Dripping black devours the room.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Two place settings are arranged on the living room coffee table.

Take-out Chinese food sits half eaten on good china. An empty bottle of red wine sits between boxes of Chinese food.

Anna arrives with the backup bottle and is now wearing a sweater.

She hands a collegiate rowing team sweatshirt to Malcolm.

ANNA

It's getting cold.

MALCOLM CROWE sits on the floor at the coffee table, his vest and tie on the sofa behind him. A jacket and an overcoat lay on a briefcase next to him.

Malcolm is in his thirties with thick, wavy hair and striking, intelligent eyes that squint from years of intense study. His charming, easy-going smile spreads across his face. He points.

MALCOLM

That's one fine frame. A fine frame it is.

Malcolm points to the huge framed certificate propped up on a dining room chair. It's printed on aged parchment-type paper.

The frame is a polished mahogany.

He slips on the sweatshirt.

MALCOLM

How much does a fine frame like that cost, you think?

Anna hands the backup bottle over to Malcolm.

ANNA

(smiling)

I've never told you... but you sound a little like Dr. Seuss when you're drunk.

Malcolm uncorks the wine and starts pouring in the empty glass.

MALCOLM

Anna, I'm serious. Serious I am, Anna.

Anna giggles. She's clearly buzzed herself. Malcolm doesn't get it. Anna takes a few calming sips of her wine. Her attention slowly moves to the framed certificate.

ANNA

Mahogany. I'd say that cost at least a couple hundred. Maybe

three.

MALCOLM

Three? We should hock it. Buy a
C.D. rack for the bedroom.

ANNA

Do you know how important this is?
This is big time.

(beat)

I'm going to read it for you,
doctor.

MALCOLM

Do I really sound like Dr. Seuss?

Anna ignores Malcolm and clears her throat. She leans forward her seat and reads the certificate out loud as Malcolm tries to tickle her.

ANNA

In recognition for his outstanding
achievement in the field of child
psychology, his dedication to his
work, and his continuing efforts to
improve the quality of life for
countless children and their
families, the City of Philadelphia
proudly bestows upon its son Dr.
Malcolm Crowe... That's you...
the Mayor's Citation for
Professional Excellence.

Beat. The power of the words sobers the two of them.

ANNA

Wow. They called you their son.

MALCOLM

We can keep it in the bathroom.

Anna turns to Malcolm. He smiles.

MALCOLM

It's not real, Anna. Some
secretary wrote that up. Don't
tell me you thought it was real?

Anna's expression becomes serious.

MALCOLM

What?

She just keeps staring. Beat.

MALCOLM

Don't do the quiet thing. You know
I hate it.

Beat.

ANNA

This is an important night for us.
Finally someone is recognizing the
sacrifices you made. That you have
put everything second, including me,
for those families they're talking
about.

Malcolm plays softly with her face. Anna takes his hands
and holds them steady.

ANNA

They're also saying that my husband
has a gift. Not an ordinary gift
that allows him to hit a ball over a
fence. Or a gift that lets him
produce beautiful images on a
canvas... Your gift teaches
children how to be strong in
situations where most adults would
piss on themselves.

(beat)

Yes, I believe what they wrote
about you.

Anna lets go of his hands. Anna's eyes are emotional.
Malcolm smiles softly.

MALCOLM

Thank you.

Anna leans towards him. They hold each other tight.
Beat.

MALCOLM

What are we hugging about again?

Anna laughs as she wipes her eyes.

ANNA

Nothing. There wasn't supposed to be any crying at this celebration. Just a lot of drinking and sex.

Malcolm's charming, easy-going smile returns.

MALCOLM

I would like some red wine in a glass.

Anna hands him his glass. He stares at it.

MALCOLM

I would not like it in a mug. I would not like it in a jug.

Malcolm looks at Anna surprised at what he said. They crack up laughing. Their sweet laughter fills the house.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Two giggling shadows appear in the bedroom doorway. They try to turn on the light. It doesn't come on.

MALCOLM

Bulb's out.

Anna giggles some more as Malcolm's shadow stumbles across the bedroom.

Malcolm turns on the bathroom light.

A shaft of light falls on Anna as she stands in the corner of the room.

Anna smiles playfully and pulls off her sweater. She sways to a pretend striptease song.

Malcolm can't hold back his grin. He joins in - slowly peeling off the sweat-shirt. He looks back to Anna. She's stopped her playful dance. She's facing away from him.

He walks towards her. His grin quietly disappears.

Malcolm's face turns to rock as his attention is drawn to the shattered window in their bedroom. The wind moves through the room. A lamp lays broken on the ground by the window.

Malcolm kneels down. Beat. Anna's eyes fill with a quiet awareness.

ANNA

He's still in the house.

A shadow from the bathroom flats over both of them.

Anna screams.

Malcolm spins around. His heart stops.

Malcolm and Anna stare at the bathroom doorway. They know someone is inside. Beat.

Malcolm slowly starts towards the door. The first thing that comes into view are the clothes on the bathroom floor. Then the figure of a man comes into view. A STRANGER stands bare chested in the back of the bathroom.

No one makes a sound.

The stranger is about nineteen. Drugged out. Pitch black eyes bulging. His body is covered in scars and bruises. His hands are folded in front of him. He shakes ever so slightly. He has a patch of white in his hair.

Malcolm speaks in a very calm voice. Never takes his eyes off the stranger.

MALCOLM

Anna, don't move. Don't say a word.

Anna barely nods her understanding.

MALCOLM

(to the stranger)

This is forty-seven Locust Street.
You have broken a window and
entered a private residence. Do
you understand what I'm saying?

The stranger slowly looks up for the first time. His eyes lock on Malcolm.

STRANGER

You don't know so many things.

Beat.

MALCOLM

There are no needles or
prescription drugs of any kind in
this house.

The stranger suddenly comes forward into the doorway.
Malcolm stumbles back onto the edge of the bed.

Anna sees the stranger for the first time. Her face
drains of color.

The stranger looks at Malcolm. He half grins.

STRANGER

Are you drunk?

The stranger's stare slides to Anna.

STRANGER

Did you get him drunk?

The stranger gazes at Anna. Gazes directly into her
eyes. A penetrating, unwavering stare.

STRANGER

Do you know why you're scared when
you're alone?

Anna's expression instantly changes.

STRANGER

I know.

Beat. The room goes silent.

MALCOLM

What do you want? I don't
understand what you want.

The stranger turns and glares at Malcolm.

STRANGER

What you promised.

Malcolm stops all movement.

ANNA

My God.

MALCOLM

Do I know you?

STRANGER

Let's all celebrate, Dr. Malcolm Crowe. Recipient of awards from the Mayor on the news. Dr. Malcolm Crowe, he's helped so many children... And he doesn't even remember my name?

Malcolm can't speak. Beat. The stranger's face starts to tremble.

STRANGER

I was ten when you worked with me.

Beat. Malcolm's intelligent eyes race for answers.

STRANGER

Downtown clinic? Single parent family?

(beat)

I had a possible mood disorder...

(beat)

I had no friends... you said I was socially isolated.

(beat)

I was afraid -- you called it acute anxiety...

(beat)

You were wrong.

(beat)

Come on, clear your head... Male, nine... Single parent... Mood disorder... Acute anxiety.

Malcolm looks like someone hit him with a sledgehammer.

STRANGER

I'm nineteen. I have drugs in my system twenty-four hours a day... I still have no friends. I still have no peace. I'm still afraid.

Tears jump into the stranger's eyes.

STRANGER

...I'm still afraid.

Malcolm stands.

MALCOLM

Please give me a second to think.

Malcolm's shaking hands touch his mouth as he stares at the stranger. Beat.

MALCOLM
Bed Freidken?

STRANGER
Some people call me freak.

MALCOLM
...Ronald... Ronald Sumner?

Tears fall down the stranger's face.

STRANGER
I am a freak.

Malcolm looks up at the sound of those words. Something clicks in his head.

MALCOLM
--Vincent?

The room goes silent again.

MALCOLM
Vincent Gray?

VINCENT GRAY stares with surprise through his tears.

Malcolm lets out a deep breath like he just emerged from deep waters.

MALCOLM
I do remember you, Vincent. You
were a good kid. Very smart...
Quiet... Compassionate...
Unusually compassionate...

Vincent's eyes burn at Malcolm.

VINCENT
You forgot cursed.

Vincent is fully crying now.

VINCENT
You failed me.

MALCOLM

(whispers)

Vincent... I'm sorry I didn't help
you... I can try to help you now.

Vincent turns to the sink. His hand goes in. He turns around and raises a gun at Malcolm. He fires. A violent, ear-shattering echo. Malcolm clutches his stomach and folds like a rag doll onto the bed.

Vincent instantly moves the gun to his own head. Another horrific blast spikes the air. Vincent crumples onto the bathroom floor.

Anna's chilling screams fill their home.