

Inside Job (c)
A play in two Acts
Written by Kenneth Vest

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Inside Job tells the story of Abby and Will Mason, whose son Wyatt dies of a heroin overdose. Abby grieves and seeks comfort as Will secretly plots revenge against the dealer who sold his son the fatal drugs. Their separate paths collide in a final reckoning.

Cast:

Will Mason: 50s lawyer, criminal defense attorney.

Abby Mason: 40s Strong yet softhearted; She is a psychologist.

Wyatt Mason: 20s Wyatt smokes pot and uses heroin. Convinced he's in control.

Nadine Guidry: 30s Full of life, Also a psychologist and Abby's friend and counselor.

Griff: 50s Will's long-time friend; Former TV reporter.

Dawson: 40s Private investigator.

Sander: 30s Heroin dealer. He is skinny and on edge.

The play takes place in a town, today.

SETTINGS: Presentational: platforms, risers and actor boxes are placed on the four corners of a square; a platform is placed in the middle where most of the lines and conversations are delivered. A design will be attached.

Act I

Scene 1: Will and Abby's kitchen.

Scene 2: Sander's apartment; Drug exchange; Dorm room (The next week).

Scene 3: Will and Abby's bedroom (Several days later).

Scene 4: Will and Griff at a local bar (Later that night).

Scene 5: Will and Abby in their kitchen (The next day).

Scene 6: Will meets with Dawson for the first time (The next day).

Scene 7: Abby in Nadine's office (Six months after Wyatt's death).

Scene 8: Will imagines a conversation with Wyatt in kitchen/breakfast nook.

ACT II

Scene 1: Dawson has an update for Will.

Scene 2: Abby and Will in their bedroom.

Scene 3: Dawson and Will review the plan.

Scene 4: Abby and Nadine at a bar.

Scene 5: Dawson tells Will what he's found so far.

Scene 6: Will and Abby's Kitchen.

Scene 7: Dawson gives will the final results.

Scene 8: Will dreams he's talking to Wyatt, as Will contemplates suicide

Scene 8: Nadine's apartment; later that Fall.

Scene 9: Will and Griff at his house.

Scene 10: Will, Abby, Griff and Sander; same location

PROLOGUE

House lights fade. A window is revealed in a small space that implies Wyatt's small dorm room. Wyatt steps out of the shadows, his guitar strapped over his shoulder; he plays or pantomimes mournful guitar music. He sits on the window sill with his back to the audience. He works the guitar just long enough to set the mood and then the lights and music fade.

ACT 1

SCENE ONE

Sunday morning, kitchen/breakfast nook in the home of Will, Abby and Wyatt. Abby and Will are drinking coffee and reading the newspaper. Wyatt is off stage still asleep.

WILL

The Yankees suck!

ABBY

(She's heard this before; she pauses)

They must be on a losing streak. When they start winning you'll fall in love again.

WILL

Not this season.

ABBY

Every season.

WILL

Am I that predictable?

ABBY

Yes, especially about baseball.

WILL

Where's that boy? Is he still asleep?

ABBY

Most likely.

WILL

I wish I could still sleep this late.

ABBY

No one is stopping you.

WILL

Too old. I can take naps but when the sun rises so do I. Is he ready to go?

ABBY

How should I know. I don't pack for him anymore.

WILL

Did I tell you about the time I ran for class president in college?

ABBY

I've lost count.

WILL

It's such a meaningless position. So I started a write in campaign . . .

ABBY

Because you always slept through your morning classes and it was entirely fitting that you should hold an office with absolutely no authority or any duties worthy of note.

WILL

I could sleep all day back then. I'm going to yell for him to come down.

ABBY

Let him be.

WILL

This is his last day before heading back to school.

ABBY

Why do you always make such a big deal about it?

WILL

I'm jealous. Going off to campus living free and easy. Attending classes when it suits you.

ABBY

Wyatt's good about attending class.

WILL

He excels at college life. I'll give him that.

ABBY

Please don't start.

WILL

Have you spoken to him?

ABBY

He knows.

WILL

Knowing and doing are not the same.

ABBY

(Lowering her voice) Give him some room. It doesn't help if he shuts us out.

WILL

Have you found a new counselor?

ABBY

Working on it. I'm trying to line up someone at his school.

WILL

One of your colleagues?

ABBY

No. We need to build his trust, it can't be too close to home.

WILL

Whoever it is we need to be able to get warning signs. At least a heads up

ABBY

That's the dicey part. Can't ask someone to breach his privacy.

WILL

You and your psychologist pals need to be more like lawyers. Situational ethics.

ABBY

Says the lawyer. That doesn't get any funnier the more you say it.

WILL

Why can't he still be ten.

ABBY

I hear him coming. Don't start a fight.

Wyatt shuffles in from offstage. His hair is mussed, and he seems sullen. He is carrying a backpack. He sets it on the table.

WYATT

Good morning.

WILL

Rough night?

WYATT

No.

ABBY

We're having bacon and eggs. You too?

WYATT

Nothin' for me thanks.

WILL

Why the backpack?

ABBY

Are you ready to go back to campus tomorrow?

WYATT

Yeah.

WILL

Where do you get so much energy?

WYATT

Funny.

WILL

Son do you think the Yankees suck. I do.

WYATT

I don't care.

WILL

You should. Baseball is vital to our national well being.

ABBY

I hardly think so.

WILL

You're wrong. Baseball is elegance, poetry and wonder.

WYATT

Mom have you seen my folder?

ABBY

All of your papers for this semester are by the front door.

WILL

Need your backpack eh? Where are you off to this morning?

WYATT

To play video games with Gene. We're using my Game Station.

WILL

Looks like a bong to me. How about you Abby?

ABBY

Do we have to?

WYATT

That's what's up. You blazed in your day.

WILL

The pot I smoked made me eat too many snickers. You turn into a zombie.

WYATT

Word.

WILL

What does that mean again?

ABBY

Is this how we're going to spend the rest of the day?

WYATT

I gotta go. Gene is waiting on me.

Wyatt rises and grabs his backpack by one of the straps. The back pack swings away from him and hits the table. A small packet of white powder spills onto the table. Will and Wyatt both grab for it. Will snags it first.

WILL

This doesn't look like pot.

ABBY

Jesus!

WYATT

It's nothing you guys. I'm gonna dip outa here.

Wyatt slings the back pack over his shoulder and tries to leave. Will places his hand on his shoulder and Wyatt sits down.

WILL

Cocaine or heroin!

WYATT

Please chill.

ABBY

That's all you have to say?

WYATT

It's Gene's dope. I'm holding it for him.

WILL

(Picks up the plastic bag)

You're dodging son.

It's heroin. Gene uses.

WYATT

Dear God.

ABBY

And you?

WILL

Not really.

WYATT

What does that mean?

ABBY

Will starts going through Wyatt's backpack. He pulls a bong out of the bag and fishes around some more. He finds a couple of small bags of pot.

WILL

You're not going back to school.

WYATT

You've already paid.

WILL

Let me worry about the finances.

ABBY

We can't send you back to school. I won't . . .

WYATT

I told you. It's not my dope.

WILL

Why are you holding for Gene?

WYATT

He's afraid of his old man.

WILL

We don't scare you? That can be arranged.

WYATT

Gene's dad beats him.

ABBY

I can't believe this. Have you used heroin?

WYATT

I've smoked it a couple of times. But I'll stop.

WILL

Do you believe him?

ABBY

I don't know. His pot smoking is bad enough. . . I hoped he'd never do hard drugs. He's in love with getting high. Emotionally, drugs are almost like his girl friend.,

WILL

But did you think he would go this far?

ABBY

You know me I always expect the worst. Still doesn't make it easier to handle.

WYATT

Uh . . . I'm right here.

WILL

You need to sit out of the University for awhile. Get clean.

WYATT

And do what? Deliver pizza?

WILL

Could do you some good. Let you get a taste of life without a college degree.

WYATT

Fine with me I can smoke a spliff while I deliver pizza.

WILL

This is how you convince us to send you back to campus?

ABBY

We're here to support you sweetheart.

WYATT

What if I don't need your help.

WILL

(Holding up the bag of Heroin)

Do you have any idea how dangerous this is?

WYATT

Not if I get it from someone I trust.

WILL

So you have tried it.

ABBY

You have to be honest with us.

WYATT

I smoked it once that's all.

ABBY

Have you ever been with Gene when he injects himself?

WYATT

I guess.

WILL

That's how it starts. We've had this talk.

WYATT

Not again. Pot doesn't lead to stronger drugs it just doesn't.

WILL

But it introduces you to them and sooner or later you'll try.

WYATT

I won't do hard drugs anymore. I promise.

ABBY

You have to swear. No Heroin.

WYATT

You have my word. Never again

WILL

How about the pot.

WYATT

No dad.

WILL

Why don't you quit? For one week. Just to show us you can.

WYATT

Because I don't want to.

WILL

But you're almost always high. Are you depressed? Is it anxiety? Jump in here anytime dear you do this for a living.

ABBY

It can cause dependance. Especially if you start young and you did.

WILL

Junior high. Right?

ABBY

Let's slow down. We need a new strategy. You're going to be twenty-one soon. We can't force you to do anything.

WILL

But we can cut you off. No college. No money.

ABBY

Easy. You're not helping.

WILL

How many times have we had this conversation? I've lost count.

ABBY

What is your solution?

WILL

Tough love. Hand him off to the cops God-dam it! Put him in one of those rehab centers that send a couple of goons to swoop him up and lock him away for 90 days.

ABBY

Stop blaming him! Punishment and shame don't work. Addiction is a sickness not a moral failure. He has a learning disorder.

WILL

So what was rehab about? The wilderness program. A month freezing his ass off in the woods.

ABBY

They weren't the right treatments for him. So we keep trying.

WILL

You're the expert. But I think we're letting him off too easy.

ABBY

What do you have to say son? Maybe you should stay at home until we figure this out.

WYATT

I'd go crazy.

WILL

You have to do something. I can recover your tuition. And if I can't screw it

WYATT

I'll see a counselor.

ABBY

With a strategy and a strong plan that you must follow.

WYATT

OK.

WILL

Did I miss something here. What's the end game?

ABBY

We need a counselor who can reach him by understanding and sharing his feelings. Behavioral and motivational therapy.

WILL

What are we on Oprah!

ABBY

The treatment has to connect with him on a deep level. . .to motivate him to want to change.

WYATT

Give me another chance dad.

WILL

How many chances do you need?

ABBY

He needs a plan with milestones. His counselor can work out the specifics. . .but he has to be accountable.

WYATT

Anything.

WILL

That's it?

ABBY

Look. I wish he were ten too. But forcing him stay at home won't work. Are we going to hire someone to watch him Twenty-four-Seven?

WYATT

I'll make it work. I promise.

WILL

The pot too.

ABBY

Of course.

WYATT

I can control the pot.

WILL

Here we go again.

ABBY

Pot too. Son. It's the only way.

WYATT

You're killing me.

WILL

Not yet. Just make sure you're clean for the weekly drug tests I'm going to arrange.

ABBY

I'm scared.

WILL

I'm pissed.

ABBY

Tomorrow I'm going to your school and spend the day with Student Affairs. I'll find the right counselor and therapy, and we'll make a plan. And you will see your counselor before the week is out. Do you agree?

WYATT

Of course. Please don't worry. I won't do hard drugs.

ABBY

Promise me. You'll break my heart if you don't quit.

WYATT

Never again. I promise.

WILL

One positive drug test - for anything - I come to campus and drag you home. And you need to leave the dope. Gene will have to understand.

SCENE THREE:

(One week later)

Evening, Will and Abby's bedroom. Will is wearing slacks and a white button down shirt with the tie pulled loose. He is drinking a glass of scotch neat. Abby is dressing for bed. The mood is somber. Earlier today they buried their son Wyatt.

ABBY

Are you as tired as I am?

WILL

Yes.

ABBY

There's still so much to do.

WILL

Go to sleep.

ABBY

Why do they send so many flowers. We told them not to.

WILL

People don't think. They don't pay attention.

ABBY

Flowers die. Don't our friends realize that?

WILL

Someone else will worry about the flowers.

ABBY

A plant was left on our doorstep with no name. I need to know who sent it.

Abby starts to go downstairs. Will takes her arm . . .

WILL

You have to stop. I'm on my way out to see Griff. I'll handle it.

ABBY

I missed him at the church.

WILL

Nothing like a funeral to bring friends and family together.

(Pause)

Was that grave side service your idea?

ABBY

It was Unitarian. No Jesus. No God.

WILL

The unity was palpable. Not a dry eye in the house.

ABBY

I thought it was lovely. The minister drew his inspiration from several traditions, Jewish and Native American.

WILL

Not enough drums and peyote for my money.

ABBY

The broken heart that will never mend. Jewish people are right we should rip our clothes.

WILL

Raising his glass.

Relief comes in many forms.

ABBY

And he offered the Jewish tradition for family and friends to shovel dirt over the coffin.

WILL

Clever way to sneak in religion.

ABBY

Jews and Native Americans believe the earth is the center of life. "So with loving hands we bury our son letting go of his body to become part of Mother earth, and living nature. We let his body go but he will always be with us in our heart our soul and mind."

WILL

The poetry was lost on me.

ABBY

Minister Wainwright is a kind man. You didn't want to meet him or help with planning.

WILL

We buried our son today. The rituals are meaningless. I feel nothing.

ABBY

That's a start, admitting you're numb.

WILL

I was wondering when the therapy would begin.

ABBY

We're going to need some help.

WILL

First we have to respond to the pathetic "thoughts and prayers" from our friends and people we barely know.

ABBY

What would you have them do?

WILL

They should at least come up with a decent condolence. No more, "Take heart it was God's plan." Unbelievable. God came down from heaven, turned my son into a junkie and gave him that last hit. The one with God knows what in it. Oh wait! God does know because it was his brilliant plan.

ABBY

They want to comfort us.

Will sits next to Abby.

WILL

We're that family now. That's how we'll be known. "It's so sad about the Mason's losing their only son. I don't know how they carry on. I don't think I could."

ABBY

Why didn't you shovel dirt on his coffin?

WILL

Maybe I'm hoping he'll make a break for it. That's right I'm in denial. I don't deny it. What's next anger or bargaining?

ABBY

There isn't an orderly path through grief. You don't go through one stage, neatly and methodically on to the next. It's not tidy it's bewildering and overwhelming.

WILL

Don't analyze me.

ABBY

You're human you have deep feelings. You can't hide from them. They will come out.

WILL

Counsel someone who needs it. I know what I have to do.

(Long pause)

ABBY

Do you remember the night he was born? We took that birthing class and learned all about labor and delivery. The nurse told us after he was born he would be alert for awhile, as long as an hour. His eyes would be wide open. He might even be smiling. She called it the golden hour. I'd start nursing him and we would begin to bond. I couldn't wait for those first few moments that would begin our lives together. They were going to be magical.

WILL

I remember.

ABBY

She begins to laugh, lightly

And when he was born, towards the end it was hard on both of us, he came out screaming with one eye shut tight, like a tiny bald headed pirate. I started to cry. We looked at each other and you said " Ahhh. The golden hour that wonderful moment when mother and child bond in peaceful love." We laughed so hard. Couldn't stop. It was good.

WILL

He didn't stop crying either. We didn't sleep for weeks.

ABBY

There are so many memories . . . I

She begins to cry

WILL

Don't! Stop crying. Goddamit. There have been enough tears for one day.

ABBY

I'll cry as much as I want. He was my baby, my lovely, tragic boy.

WILL

I miss him too Abby.

ABBY

Why didn't we take him out of that school? What were we thinking?

WILL

Does it matter? Drugs are everywhere.

ABBY

(Pause)

I don't think I've seen you cry yet.

WILL

No distractions. I need a clear head.

ABBY

Why?

WILL

There's so much we need to know. All we've been told is that he died of an overdose.

ABBY

What difference does it make? How does knowing more help?

WILL

Details mean something to me. My life is research and solving complex problems. I don't like unanswered questions. I need to know how he got the drugs. What we could have done differently.

ABBY

We'll never know. I'm so tired.

Will steps to his laptop. He begins to tap on the keys.

WILL

You won't see me shed any tears. No time. Need to find out who did this to him.

ABBY

I need to sleep. Let's talk in the morning.

WILL

Sure. Sure. In the morning. He sent a lot of texts to the same number the day he died. That's a good place to start.

SCENE EIGHT:

Music from the prologue fades up. Will enters the kitchen from off stage. It's the middle of the night. One dim light shines over the breakfast table. He is dressed in a bathrobe covering his pajamas, hair mussed. He pours himself a healthy glass of scotch and sits at the table.

The music swells as a pale circle of light beams upstage center. Wyatt steps into the light. He takes a few steps downstage but remains behind his father. Will looks straight ahead imagining his son is there. The music fades as Wyatt speaks.

WYATT

Hey Pops. Still drinking I see.

WILL

Can't sleep.

WYATT
Try a pill.

WILL
I did.

WYATT
You drink and take pills?

WILL
Right.

WYATT
I thought I was the addict.

WILL
Once you were gone I didn't see the point in staying sober.

WYATT
Well you could stop after one or two.

WILL
I don't get that. Scotch for instance. Especially single malt. That first sip is a blessing. It hits the happy place in your brain. I don't have just one or two drinks. And I don't understand people who do. Anything that makes you feel this good, why stop?

(Pause)

It helps with the sadness.

WYATT
Mom says it makes you more sad and keeps you in denial.

WILL
Remember what I always say to people who never drink?

WYATT
No. I did drugs remember?

WILL
So this is the best you're going to feel all day long?

(Tries to laugh but can't)

I had a dream soon after you died. I still have it most every night. You're alive and walking down a shadowy street. Your face is pale as a winter cloud. You have an anxious look, wandering around in the dark in some run down part of the city. You're cold and lost. People walk by trying to ignore you, they think you're begging. Every once in a while you'll stop someone and ask them for help. You keep saying, "I don't want any money I just want to go home. Please can you help me? I can't find the way. Please help me call. I need to go home."

WYATT

I'm not coming home dad.

WILL

I should have kicked your ass when you were twelve, the first time we caught you with pot. We should have put you in total lock down. And joking about my drug use in college was stupid. I should have lied about it.

WYATT

You were funny talking about your college days.

WILL

Not much to laugh about anymore.

WYATT

Remember the time you were drunk when you picked me up from rehab? You were in no shape to be driving but you insisted. You kept denying it and wouldn't let me drive. Sometimes you weren't the best role model.

WILL

Thanks for reminding me.

WYATT

Dad. It's OK. You didn't give me permission. Your drinking had nothing to do with me.

WILL

We never should have let you go back to that school.

WYATT

Please don't.

WILL

Why'd you do it? Everything was going your way. You were doing well in class. You had a girlfriend. When I came to get your things I saw the sign on the ceiling the one you looked up at every day when you woke up. "Try to stay clean today." Why did you shoot up that night?

WYATT

Pops. It wasn't supposed to be my last hit.

WILL

You broke your mother's heart. Mine too.

WYATT

Sorry, it was just bad luck. You and mom did all you could. It's an inside job.

WILL

What the hell does that mean?

WYATT

You couldn't get clean for me. Group therapy didn't work for me. That's where you meet other druggies, buy dope and learn about new ways to get loaded. You always thought the right program would "fix me." Doesn't work that way. I was more committed to being high then to getting sober. It's an Inside job.

WILL

Bullshit. The dealer had something to do with it.

WYATT

Please give yourself a break.

WILL

I'm losing your mother.

WYATT

I know. Do you blame her?

WILL

She'll see I'm right.

Music fades in and builds to the end of the scene.

WYATT

Sure you're going about it the right way?

WILL

It's the only way I know son. Data. Information and settling the score.

WYATT

That doesn't mean it'll work.

He moves back upstage as the light follows him into the shadows. Music fades with black out.