

Opold Atlas

HOUSE WE LIVE IN  
from Act I In, If

IRENE

Are you here long, Will?

BROWN

No, just a couple of minutes--

IRENE

Gee, it must be late--Here I just went out to the movies and I was going to get back early but I had to bump into Mrs. Roder--and you know how she can talk--she talked me deaf, dumb and blind--I tried to tell her I had a hungry man home but--she--Did you eat anything?

BROWN

Yeah, I had some milk and cake--and some cigarettes--

IRENE

Well, it isn't my fault--Everybody was telling me what a good picture it was--so I thought I'd sneak in a show before you came home--

BROWN

Oh, so you just came back from the movies?

IRENE

Yes--

BROWN

It's pretty late--

IRENE

Well, I told you, I met Mrs. Roder--and it was a big picture--pretty good too--you ought to see it if you get the chance--It played on Broadway for a couple of months--the name is--let me see--what's the name again--Isn't it funny, I can never remember the names of those darn movies--Oh, what's the difference--it was pretty good--it was all about--What's eating you anyway--Dassen't I go to the movies any more?

BROWN

You can go any place you want to, for my part--

IRENE

Then what are you looking at me like that for?

BROWN

What's the matter, can't I look?

IRENE

Go ahead and look if it does you any good--Go ahead and look--

BROWN

Irene, tell me, how's your doctor friend?

IRENE

Mind your own damn business!

BROWN

Irene--you're no better than a--I don't know what to call you--

IRENE

Then don't even try.

BROWN

Oh, shut up, shut up--I'll kill you yet--My God, What do you think I am--  
a rag? I love you too much--that's the whole damn trouble--I'll rip you  
out of me--taking advantage of me--

IRENE

Oh, who's asking you to love me--who wants you--I hate the sight of you--  
you little bus driver.

BROWN

If you feel that way about it--Then what the hell did you want to marry me  
for--Looked like the best meal ticket, huh--

IRENE

Now you're getting on to yourself--

BROWN

Shut up you--don't talk to me like that or I'll--I'll--

IRENE

Oh, you'll do nothing--you never have and never will--take a look at yourself--  
and I lived with you for two years--Do you think I'm blind--

No, what I do think the trouble with you is--you're looking for a good time and it doesn't matter who or what it is so long as it's a pair of pants--

IRENE

Don't you dare say that--

BROWN

The truth hurts, doesn't it--

IRENE

It's a damn lie!

BROWN

Oh, it ain't such a damn lie--The only reason you married me was because I was wearing a marine uniform. I know--just back from the war and a hero--did your bit for your country and married a uniform--heroine stuff--

IRENE

Sure--

BROWN

And I thought I was getting a wife and a home--Wife, hell--

IRENE

You know better now, don't you--

BROWN

I'll bet you get a great kick out of going with that doctor friend and thinking I don't know about it--romantic stuff--ain't it--

IRENE

Sure it is--how do you like that?

BROWN

You can go to hell with him--if you feel that way about it--I can get along without you--

IRENE

Oh, never mind, I'll get out of here one of these fine days--You'll come home and find the house empty--I'll put the furniture in a warehouse and be rid of the whole mess--

4  
BROWN

So you've got it all planned between you--When's it come off?

IRENE

You'll find out soon enough--maybe today--maybe tomorrow--

BROWN

Why don't you go now?

IRENE

When I'm good and ready, I'll go--

BROWN

Suck the rest out of me while there's time--

IRENE

I'll let you suffer for a change.

BROWN

You--do you know what you're talking about--The sooner you go the better--

IRENE

I'll go all right--don't you fear--

BROWN

Can't be too soon--no--Not after that--Go ahead, I've stood about enough from you--

IRENE

You're not the only one's been standing for things around here--look at me--what've I got to show for the two years that I'm married to you--Nothing--I'm stuck in this hole--wasting my life away--Why?--Just because I married like a fool--I thought you were somebody--would do something--You were ten years older than me--I thought you were a man--But where are we--you're a bus driver now and that's all you'll ever be--maybe you're satisfied--you're thirty-three--you've got a home and a job--that's all you want--you're satisfied--but I'm not. I'm young--I'm only twenty-two--and when I start thinking that things'll be the same way the next ten years, the next twenty years, the next thirty years, trapped like a rat for the rest of my life, I almost go crazy--wasting my life away--being nobody--meaning nothing--Why--And I don't even love you--oh, don't get the idea that what I want is a good time or anything like that--what I want is a decent home, decent friends and a husband whom I and people respect--I want to be somebody, nothing much, but somebody--I don't want to just throw my life away--And, oh, I wouldn't even care about that--you know, well enough, that I'd work and drudge and put up with everything--but what's the use--I don't even love you--

IRENE

Oh--

BROWN

Let's cut it out, Irene-- I love you-- I can't help it-- We didn't mean all we said, It was just the argument--let's forget all this--

IRENE

What's the use--you can't even understand--

BROWN

What can't I understand-- I work for you don't I-- I slave for you, I do everything for you-- I try hard to please you, don't I?-- If you're mad because of what I said when you came in--well, it hurt me-- Why do you have to go out with him-- You're my wife and--and--what's the matter, why can't we get along decently--we were happy the first year, weren't we? We can still patch things up and get along like we used to-- What do you say? Come on, let's turn over a new leaf--

IRENE

Can't you understand-- I don't love you anymore-- What do you want me to do?

BROWN

You once did.

IRENE

No, it's just as you said before-- You came back from the war and I was a dumb kid with a lot of stupid notions. It was an infatuation, that's all--

BROWN

Oh, I didn't mean that, Irene-- I just said that because I was mad.

IRENE

But it was right--the uniform got me--

BROWN

Oh hell--

IRENE

Why don't you look at things straight-- It would be better for the two of us if we break up-- We weren't meant for each other-- Forget me, that's all--

110  
BROWN

forget you.

IRENE

I never really loved you, come to think of it--and sometimes I positively hate you. Do you still want to live with me after knowing that? There you are-- that's the truth--you'll be better off without me--

BROWN

We--maybe--maybe--something can bring us together again--

IRENE

Nothing can--

BROWN

Maybe a kid--

IRENE

And be nailed down tighter-- No!

BROWN

Make things different--

IRENE

No--No--No--

BROWN

Why not?

IRENE

No!-- Get away--

BROWN

I'll kill you yet--I'll kill you yet--