

Act One, Scene Three: The Loman House

It is early next evening and, instead of going to his home, Charlie enters the Loman house, carrying his briefcase. Linda is standing calmly, within herself, a few suitcases beside her, waiting for something to happen. The living room and kitchen seem to be picked up and somewhat in order. Charlie approaches her cautiously.

CHARLIE, *gently*: This vacation will do you good, Linda. You'll see.

LINDA, *with slight conviction*: I know what I saw, Charlie. He was here. Willy was here!

CHARLIE, *patiently*: You know that's impossible Linda. You were seeing things. You are exhausted. You may not think so, but even you can be exhausted, Linda.

LINDA, *stubbornly*: He was dressed as a Giant Squid. You can't make that up, Charlie.

CHARLIE, *curious*: Hmmm. A squid. That's funny. I could have sworn... *Snapping out of it, impatiently*. Linda, your mind is over active. You need to put it to sleep. And it's the mind that what counts, dear.

LINDA, *relenting*: Perhaps you're right. Get some rest, some sleep. When I come back maybe the boys can fix this place up. God knows it's falling down. Willy couldn't keep up with it. It's a real dump.

CHARLIE: It served its purpose.

LINDA, *rolling her eyes*: What purpose, Charlie?

CHARLIE: Maybe one of the boys will move back in. Maybe Biff. That's what Willy always wanted.

LINDA, *laughing*: Ha! That's not what I wanted. I couldn't wait for those bums to move out. I'm still doing Happy's laundry. The kid still shits in his pants and wets his bed.

CHARLIE, *consoling her*: Well, you don't have to live here either, Linda. Sell this place. It's falling down. I've got plenty of room.

Linda is silent and stares at Charlie, then at the ceiling, then at Charlie, then at the ceiling. Charlie does the same, but is completely puzzled. They both look like jackasses, but this moronic dance is interrupted by the horn of a taxicab.

CHARLIE, *steady*: You'd better get going. *Charlie reaches into his pockets and pulls out a wad of cash*. Here, Linda. Buy yourself something nice.

LINDA: Oh, Charlie, I can't take this.

CHARLIE: Please! Don't be foolish. And think about what I said.

LINDA, *shyly*: Gee, Charlie. Okay.

Charlie goes over and embraces Linda and a bit of the ceiling falls and nearly misses them. Linda exits. More ceiling falls and Charlie dodges it, staring at it, seemingly worried the whole thing will come down upon him. Willy Loman, the Undead, suddenly enters, dragging his Squid costume, shocking Charlie.

WILLY, *bitterly, as the Undead tends to be*: Something else, that ceiling, eh? With the right tools and a little piece of mind...

CHARLIE, *gasping*: It's you! I know you!

WILLY, *infuriated*: And what do you mean telling my wife there's no reason she should live in this house. This house is not good enough? All the cement, the lumber, the reconstruction I put in this house. There ain't a crack to be found in it any more.

Another chunk of the ceiling falls, but this time on Willy's head.

CHARLIE: Why are you not dead?

WILLY: Never mind that! It'll be over my dead body if you think Linda is going to shack up with you.

CHARLIE: Well, you're dead, so yes.

WILLY: You sonofabitch! You were my only friend. I oughta...

CHARLIE, *trying to calm him down*: Settle down, Willy. Settle down. Let's shoot. Maybe you can tell me why you are not dead.

WILLY, *calming down*: You got cards?

CHARLIE: Of course. A man without cards is a man without a chance. *As Charlie begins shuffling, the cards fly slowly out of his hand and assemble into a strange, magical-like, pyramid structure* onto the kitchen table. Charlie is flustered and backs away from the kitchen table. (*If you can figure how to do this, please let me know because this would be pretty cool and may be a rallying point for middle school performance field trips.)*

WILLY, *scornfully*: Don't be such a nebbish, Charlie. It's just some residual vampire power.

CHARLIE, *sitting back down, humoring Willy*: So, you're a vampire now.

WILLY, *miffed*: Of course! You were at my funeral. I was dead. Now I'm not. What else could I be? A salesman?

CHARLIE: What happened? Talk about it.

WILLY, *as Charlie deals the cards*: Well, there I was, in my casket, dead as hell. Couldn't hear a thing. Didn't have a care in the world. No more bullshit sales, bullshit hotel rooms, no more chasing David Singleman's asinine idea of making a living through telemarketing. It'll never work. Then all of a sudden, I'm in a half-living, half-dead state, rising out of the casket, and my brother Ben is gnawing on my neck, sinking his teeth into me, feeding me his blood. Then he tells me the whole wretched story of "The Loman Line," that we're not salesmen, but old world vampires from a once proud industrious Jewish background who were hounded out of mid-America into behaving like drunken Irish settlers in order to have a slice of the American Dream. It's enough to make a grown man drive right off the road.

While Willy is regaling Charlie with this story, Ben appears behind Charlie, followed by a puff of smoke. Only Willy can see Ben.

BEN, *sternly*: Willy, my boy. You should not be telling your neighbor these secrets of The Loman Line.

WILLY, *surprised*: I thought that was it for you?

CHARIE: No, I've got some good cards yet.

WILLY: What?

BEN: I saved you from death. You should be more appreciative.

WILLY: More like cheated me, I'd say.

CHARLIE, *upset*: What? We just started playing. No one's cheating!

WILLY, *confused*: What are you talking about, ya big ignoramus!

CHARLIE: Just cut the cards.

BEN: There's a lot more opportunities out here, William. A diamonds is rough to the touch...

WILLY, *furious*: Fuck you and your diamonds!

CHARLIE, *trying to calm Willy*: Gee, Willy! Forget diamonds. Hearts can trump, okay? Jesus...

WILLY, *apoplectic, threatening*: Don't you curse in this house!

BEN, *fading away, collapses in a puff of smoke*: Don't say Jesus...Don't say Jesus...Don't...

WILLY, *sharing in Ben's unholy fear*: That's right—there'll be no Jesus in this house!

CHARLIE: You're crazy!

WILLY: You could never play cards or put up a ceiling. *Willy gets up and attacks Charlie, bites him, realizes his actions relents*. What did I do? Charlie? You're the only friend I got. *Pause*. Isn't that a remarkable thing? *Willy falls back as Charlie struggles to come to*. Ben! Ben! Come back. Don't go! I can't even do the undead stuff. I may as well be dead again. Oh, Ben! You got to teach me. If you could only teach me, Ben.

BEN, *suddenly rising, to the audience*: A remarkable proposition. But I'm afraid my poor undead brother William is not quite ready to be undead.

WILLY, *delirious, pathetic*: Oh, Ben! How do we get back to all the great times? The comradeship, the sleigh riding in the winter, the ruddiness—things used to be so full of light...

BEN, *interrupting*: Don't mention light! *Ben goes over to Willy and leans him up in a sitting position against the couch as Willy mutters, "Ben, Ben, Ben," ad nauseum*. Great Satan, shut the hell up and listen to me, Willy! *Ben slaps Willy in the face and finally gets his attention*. Willy *whimpers a final, pathetic, questioning...Bennnn?* 'Now, Willy, look into my eyes and concentrate. You need some rest. A long rest.

WILLY, *resolved*: I'm tired to the death.

BEN: For certain. Now be quiet and focus. *Ben pulls out an old, elegant pocket watch and begins hypnotizing Willy, using a left-to-right motion*. Willy, when I leave, you will take your tools and build yourself a casket.

WILLY: Oh, I have such fine tools!

BEN, *slightly annoyed*: Yes, I know you have fine tools. Now focus: After you build your casket you and Charlie will...

WILLY: All I need is a little piece of mind.

BEN, *more annoyed*: For God's...Yes, Willy, I know. Now focus, you whimpering simp! After you build your casket, you and Charlie will dig hole in your backyard deep enough to cover the casket...

WILLY, *as miffed as the undead can be miffed*: Charlie? Charlie can't use a shovel. He couldn't tell a shovel from a Hasting's Refrigerator. He can't handle a single, disgusting tool.

BEN, *incredibly annoyed, Ben bops Willy over the head with the stopwatch*: Attention must be paid, Willy! Attention must be paid, goddamnit!

WILLY, *beyond pathetic*: Bennnnn....

Pushed to his immortal vampyre limits, Ben pounces on Willy, goes for his jugular, and Willy finally collapses to the floor.

BEN, *conciliatory*: It's the best thing, Willy. You'll sleep for a while now. You'd only make a fool of yourself. It's the best thing. The Loman Line must go on.

Ben goes over to Charlie and revives him, drags him over and leans him up against the couch.

BEN: Charlie, it's up to you.

CHARLIE, *still groggy*: Nobody's worth nothin' dead.

BEN, *bemused*: Mother McGee! *To the audience*: Is this what happens when people live too close together? *To Charlie*: Listen to me, Charlie. Listen Carefully. *Ben takes out his somewhat broken pocket watch and attempts to hypnotize Charlie.* Now Charlie, this is what I want you to do: I want you to build a casket for Willy...

CHARLIE, *impressed*: Oh, Willy has so many fine tools...

BEN: Shut the fuck up!

CHARLIE: Oh...

BEN: Then I want you to bury it in the back yard deep enough so that only eighteen inches of dirt covers it. And I want you to take all the dirt in the trunk of my Cadillac and put it in the casket with Willy. Then I want you to plant carrots or Brussel sprouts or any goddamn thing on top of the ground above Willy's grave. Then in ten years I want you to dig up the casket and let Willy out, then run for the hills. You got that, Charlie?

CHARLIE, *puzzled*: What the hell is going on in your head? You need a job?

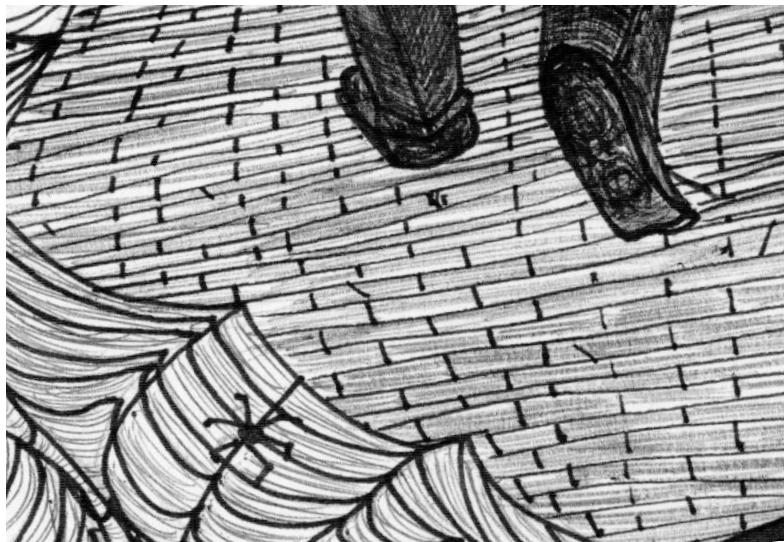
Ben, *nearly falling over in frustration*: Mother of...When I count to three, I'll be gone and you'll do these things, or I'll be back and rip your head off. The only way this spell can be broken is if there is an unforeseen collision between idiocy and irony in your life, which seems impossible for you. So here goes—pay attention to time: One...two...three....

Ben disappears, Charlie comes to...

Charlie: Jesus Christ!

We hear a howl in the background as the lights fade to a silhouette on a scrim. A stooped, exhausted figure is sawing and hammering and building a crude casket and loading a body in it. Moving about the stage, he lugs shovel after shovel of dirt from the back of a big-finned Cadillac's trunk into the casket, then quickly shovels a grave during a time lapse of lighting dissolves. Finally he pushes the casket into the grave and shovels more dirt over the gravesite. He kneels and plants something then exits the stage. The scrim goes up, the lights fade up slowly and we see green stems and the tops of carrots sprouting.

Fade to black.



Drawing: Anna Morneau