

THE HOUSE IN THE WAY

written by

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READING selections for the characters Louise and Mr.  
Harbinger

FADE IN:

TITLE CARD: 1962

READING VERSION NOTE: THIS SCENE FOLLOWS A HEATED DISCUSSION BETWEEN LOUISE'S HUSBAND, FRANK, AND MR. HARBINGER. MR. HARBINGER IS REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS AND IS TASKED WITH ACQUIRING PROPERTIES TO MAKE WAY FOR A NEW INTERSTATE FREEWAY. LOUISE INVITED MR. HARBINGER IN THE KITCHEN TO TALK WHILE HER HUSBAND CALMS DOWN.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Louise pours a cup of coffee.

MR. HARBINGER

It is a great opportunity to get a new home, something more modern perhaps.

Louise looks annoyed by the comment.

LOUISE

My husband and his brother built an additional room to this house themselves.

MR. HARBINGER

Mrs. Luna, the assessed price of this house will reflect that...

LOUISE

It isn't all about numbers and money, this is our home. Look out this window, what do you see?

MR. HARBINGER

It's a lovely yard...

LOUISE

See that tree, it's not just any tree. Frank and I planted it on our very first anniversary.. Oh, and the swing, my son loved the swing, he broke his ankle once trying to jump off from as high as he could go.

MR. HARBINGER

Those are some really fond...

LOUISE

And this house... I gave birth to my daughter in this very house, not at a hospital... this house!

Mr. Harbinger looks as though he has fallen under her nostalgic spell just briefly, but then snaps back to his 'serious about getting that signature' look.

MR. HARBINGER

You will be making a great sacrifice, but not just you... your neighbors, the Children's receiving home, even a church, they're all moving.

LOUISE

Do you remember the house you grew up in, Mr. Harbinger?

A look of sadness rolls over his face, but he quickly regains his composure.

MR. HARBINGER

My family moved around quite a lot. Never really felt like I had a home.

LOUISE

My husband grew up like that too, his father was in the military, this is really the only home he's ever known.

MR. HARBINGER

But what about you... how do you feel about having to move?

LOUISE

You know my husband has never asked me that question, not even once!

Louise pauses and takes a deep breath, gathers her thoughts. She leans forward and speaks softly.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

I truly love this house, but...  
and don't you dare repeat this to  
him... but soon it will be an  
empty nest.

MR. HARBINGER

An empty nest?

LOUISE

My daughter has already left home  
for college and my son is off to  
the military next year. A smaller  
home may make me miss them less.

MR. HARBINGER

Maybe you could talk to your  
husband?

LOUISE

Oh no, I couldn't do that. My  
husband makes the decisions in  
this house.

MR. HARBINGER

Try telling my wife that, I'd be  
in the doghouse for at least a  
week! The times are changing...

LOUISE

My husband doesn't handle change  
well. You wouldn't believe how  
upset he got when the Sacramento  
Solons moved away.

MR. HARBINGER

My wife was also very upset when  
the Solons moved.

LOUISE

Your wife is a baseball fan?

MR. HARBINGER

She is a very modern woman. I've  
got to be honest with you Mrs.  
Luna, If your husband doesn't  
sign these documents, you will  
lose your house, the compensation  
will be considerably less.

Startled by the statement, Louise's coffee cup is rattled  
spilling a little. She grabs a rag to wipe it up.

MR. HARBINGER (CONT'D)

Do you think your husband has  
calmed down by now?

Louise gives a short laugh followed by an 'are you kidding  
me' look.

LOUISE

As calm as Ralph Kramden.

Mr. Harbinger looks uncertain for a moment of who that is.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

...the Honeymooners...

MR. HARBINGER

Oh right, "One of these days  
Alice, one of these days..."