

Series: Lights Out
Show: Sub-Basement
Date: Aug 24 1943

ANNOUNCER (FRANK MARTIN):

Ironized Yeast presents ...

VOICE:

Lights out ... everybody ...

(SFX: CHIMES)

VOICE:

(ON FOURTH CHIME) It - is - later - than - you - think ...

ANNOUNCER:

(ON TWELFTH CHIME) Lights Out brings you stories of the supernatural - and the supernormal, dramatizing the fantasies and the mysteries of the unknown. We tell you this frankly -- so if you wish to avoid the excitement and tension of these - imaginative plays, we urge you calmly, but sincerely, to turn off your radio - now.

ARCH OBOLER:

(AS CHIMES FADE) This is Arch Oboler. Tonight's is a story that's happening because a very long time ago I found myself in the sub-sub-basement of a huge department store -- the strange subterranean world of half-lights and half-darknesses. So, to you who thrill to whatever might be beneath the earth, I bring you a tale of "Sub-Basement." After a brief word from Ironized Yeast's Frank Martin.

FRANK MARTIN:

Do you feel droopy these days? Tired out oftener than you ought to be? Losing too much weight perhaps? Well, if, as may be true of many people nowadays, you simply aren't getting enough vitamin B-1 and iron from your food -- if THAT'S what to blame, cheer up. Because Ironized Yeast tablets give you both vital substances -- in easy to take tablet form -- at a cost of but a few pennies a day. Men and women by the scores and hundreds who used to suffer from these deficiencies now thank the two-way help of Ironized Yeast tablets for glorious pep and strength and needed pounds regained. They tell how today they can really enjoy life again. That's right, they're thanking Ironized Yeast tablets. And now ...

VOICE:

Lights out ... everybody ...

(SFX: GONG)

(SFX: AFTER A PAUSE, A FAST-DESCENDING ELEVATOR FADES IN, THEN HUMS IN BG)

ARNIE:

(ANNOYED, SHARPLY) But of COURSE I can run an elevator!

IRMA:

(MEEKLY) I was just asking.

ARNIE:

And I told you! (PAUSE) Well, here we are ...

(SFX: ELEVATOR SLOWS, THEN STOPS ... GATE SLIDES OPEN)

ARNIE:

All right ... all right, are you getting out?

IRMA:

I suppose so.

ARNIE:

(WITH DISGUST) Suppose so. For ten years, that's all I've heard: (MIMICS HER) "Where do you work? What do you do? Why don't you let me see it?"

IRMA:

Don't get angry, Arnie.

ARNIE:

Oh, I'm not angry, I'm just telling you. Come on, this way.

(SFX: ECHO OF FOOTSTEPS IN, THEN IN BG)

IRMA:

(AWED) Such a big basement.

ARNIE:

You don't know the half of it. It's like a whole city down here.

IRMA:

A person goes through a department store and doesn't know all this is underneath.

ARNIE:

You can say that again.

IRMA:

And - you're in charge of everything down here?

ARNIE:

That's another fact. Here, look at these.

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS STOP)

IRMA:

What are they? Furnaces?

ARNIE:

Oil-burning. Heats and air-conditions the whole building up above - twenty stories.

IRMA:

Well ... where IS everybody?

ARNIE:

Nothing but a watchman at this hour of the night. Everything's shut down.

IRMA:

(YELLS SUDDENLY) HELP!

ARNIE:

What's the matter with you?!

IRMA:

(MEEK AGAIN) Nothing.

ARNIE:

What did you do THAT for?

IRMA:

Oh, I - I - I just wanted to hear my voice. It - it's like a big cave down here.

ARNIE:

(DISGUSTED) Yelling out like that ... won't you EVER grow up?

IRMA:

Don't be angry, Arnie.

ARNIE:

Oh, all right. Come on.

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS RESUME)

IRMA:

(MEEKLY) Yes, Arnie.

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE, THEN PAUSE ... ANOTHER GATE SLIDES OPEN)

ARNIE:

Come on. In here.

IRMA:

Another elevator?

ARNIE:

Well, you want to see everything, don't you?

IRMA:

Well, yes. Yes, I do.

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS INTO ELEVATOR ... GATE SLIDES SHUT ... ELEVATOR DESCENDS, HUMS IN BG)

IRMA:

Down? Some more?

ARNIE:

(DRY) Yeah.

(SFX: THEY RIDE IN SILENCE. ELEVATOR SLOWS AND STOPS ... GATE SLIDES OPEN)

ARNIE:

All right.

IRMA:

(AMAZED) Another basement.

ARNIE:

Yeah. Go ahead. Plenty of light to see behind.

IRMA:

What's down here?

ARNIE:

Come on over here, I'll - I'll show you.

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS, THEN A PAUSE)

ARNIE:

There -- in the wall.

IRMA:

Is it a - a tunnel?

ARNIE:

That's what it is.

IRMA:

But - but a tunnel down here?

ARNIE:

See those tracks?

IRMA:

Well, yes. Where do they go?

ARNIE:

How do you think all the merchandise is brought to all the stores here in the business section? Tunnel system, that's how. Right under the city streets.

IRMA:

I had no idea.

ARNIE:

Mighty few people have. Trains run on those tracks, bring the stuff right in.

IRMA:

Trains? (DOESN'T BELIEVE HIM, CHUCKLES) Ohh, Arnie ...

ARNIE:

(IRRITATED) You think all I've got to do is make jokes? You think the only kind of a train's a big one?

IRMA:

Why, I just don't know--

ARNIE:

These are little ones. They run on electric batteries, just like they have down in the mines. Come on, I'll show you.

IRMA:

Where?

ARNIE:

In the tunnel.

IRMA:

But it's so dark.

ARNIE:

There are lights every little ways. Come on.

IRMA:

I - I - I don't think so.

ARNIE:

What's the matter with you?

IRMA:

I'm afraid.

ARNIE:

Oh, for John's sake. For years, you've pestered me and pestered me to see-- (INSISTENT) You come along, Irma, you understand?

IRMA:

(RESIGNEDLY) All right.

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS AGAIN FOR A WHILE ... THEN PAUSE ON NEXT LINE)

IRMA:

Arnie? Uh, this is far enough.

ARNIE:

Well, for John's sake. What's the matter with you now?

IRMA:

I - I don't know. I--

ARNIE:

Come on. There's, uh, one of the little engines parked down at the end of the tunnel. We might as well see it.

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS AGAIN ... IRMA HESITATES BUT ARNIE PUSHES HER ON)

ARNIE:

Well, keep walking.

IRMA:

I - I think I'd like to--

ARNIE:

Down this way. (QUIETLY INSISTENT) You'll see the train.

IRMA:

Yes, but, Arnie, the lights--

(SFX: ARNIE'S FOOTSTEPS OUT)

IRMA:

Arnie? Where are you?

(SFX: IRMA'S FOOTSTEPS STOP ... SHE TURNS ABOUT)

ARNIE:

(AFTER A PAUSE, VERY CLOSE, SLIGHTLY SINISTER) Right here.

IRMA:

(STARTLED) What's the matter?

ARNIE:

Matter?

IRMA:

Oh - why are you standing so close to me?

ARNIE:

I'm your husband.

IRMA:

(CHUCKLES) Arnie, don't be silly.

ARNIE:

Irma, I'm going to tell you something.

IRMA:

Arnie, what's the matter with you?

ARNIE:

Listen to me -- for the last time.

IRMA:

Last time? Arnie, what's the matter with you?

ARNIE:

(POINTED) Do you know that - YOU can't get out of here?

IRMA:

What?

ARNIE:

You can't get out of here.

IRMA:

Arnie, what are you talking about? (NO ANSWER) What are you talking about? (NO ANSWER, SHE'S SUDDENLY CONVINCED HE'S JOKING WITH HER, RELIEVED) Oh - oh, Arnie. You haven't made a joke like that in years. Hm! The last time you tried to scare me was right after we were married -- remember? -- with that fur piece you made off was a dead animal that

had gotten in the bedroom? You remember?

ARNIE:

(DEFLATED A LITTLE) I remember. Come along further, Irma.

IRMA:

Oh, sure. (GIGGLES QUIETLY TO HERSELF)

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS AGAIN ... IN BG)

IRMA:

As long as I know what you're up to, I don't mind. How far are we going?

ARNIE:

A long way.

IRMA:

All right, Arnie. Anything you say.

ARNIE:

Don't I know it.

(SFX: MORE FOOTSTEPS, THEN OUT)

ARNIE:

All right.

IRMA:

All right - what?

ARNIE:

This is as far as we're going.

IRMA:

Oh. I - I feel funny. I've never been under the ground so far and so long. It was very nice of you, Arnie, to take me down here, so interesting. Very nice of you. (AFTER A PAUSE) Arnie? Why don't you say something? (NO ANSWER) Arnie, is something the matter? (NO ANSWER) Arnie, really. You can't frighten me. Not now, you know. (NO ANSWER) Arnie, are we waiting for someone? If we are, I think I hear him.

ARNIE:

Hear him?

IRMA:

Well, yes. Don't you?

ARNIE:

(AFTER A BEAT) No.

IRMA:

But I heard someone.

ARNIE:

I tell you, there's no one down here.

IRMA:

All right. All right, if you say so, Arnie.

ARNIE:

(DISGUSTED) "If I say so" - "if I say so" - "if I say so" ... can't you say something else but that, even NOW???

IRMA:

Now?

ARNIE:

Yes! (MENACING) Irma, I'm going--

IRMA:

There! I heard it again!

ARNIE:

What?

IRMA:

Are there trains running this late at night?

ARNIE:

Trains?

IRMA:

(SUDDENLY NERVOUS) If it's a train, we ought to get out of here - tunnel's so narrow - Arnie, please--

ARNIE:

Shut up! Let me listen.

(SFX: FAINT SLIPPERY NOISE - LIKE A LARGE WET ANIMAL PUSHING ITSELF ALONG A CONCRETE FLOOR)

IRMA:

Hear it?

ARNIE:

Will you shut up?

(SFX: NOISE CONTINUES)

ARNIE:

(CALLS OUT, HIS VOICE ECHOING) Who's there? Who's there?!

IRMA:

Isn't there supposed to be anyone?

ARNIE:

Of course not, I saw to it-- (CALLS OUT) Is that you?! Is that you, Tom?!

IRMA:

Who's Tom ... ?

ARNIE:

(CALLS) Tom, are you down here?

IRMA:

... one of the watchmen?

ARNIE:

(ANGRY, TO HIMSELF) I told him I'd pull his boxes tonight -- I told him! (CALLS) Tom! Hey, Tom!

IRMA:

What's wrong?

ARNIE:

Tom, what's the matter with you?! Come on out here, do you hear me? Come out right away or I'm firing you -- TOM!!!

IRMA:

(GIGGLES) Is - is he playing jokes, too?

ARNIE:

(TO HIMSELF) That fool, I'll break his neck if I get my hands on that --

(SFX: ARNIE'S FOOTSTEPS QUICKLY AWAY)

IRMA:

No, Arnie! Don't leave me!

(SFX: IRMA'S FOOTSTEPS BREAK INTO A RUN)

IRMA:

(BREATHLESS) Arnie, where did you go? Arnie, it's so dark - the tunnel - Arnie, where are you?!

ARNIE:

(FROM A DISTANCE, HALF GASP, HALF GROAN) Ohhh!!!

IRMA:

Arnold, was that you?

(SFX: MORE RUNNING, THEN SHE STOPS)

IRMA:

(CATCHING HER BREATH) Arnold ... it IS you! Did you cry out? What--? (GASPS IN SHOCK)

ARNIE:

Stay back!

IRMA:

You - that man. Who ... ?

ARNIE:

From what's left of his face, I - I think it's Tom.

IRMA:

What? What happ--? The train run over him? Arnold, answer me - was it?

ARNIE:

Train? No ... Something's torn out his throat.

IRMA:

(GASPS)

ARNIE:

Come on. Gotta get out o' here.

(SFX: HURRIED FOOTSTEPS)

IRMA:

Oh, yes.

ARNIE:

Something down here.

IRMA:

(FALLING BEHIND) Arnie - Arnie, wait! I can't go so fast.

ARNIE:

(TO HIMSELF) Police. Police. I'll get the police.

(SFX: ARNIE'S FOOTSTEPS OUT)

IRMA:

(FROM OFF, BUT COMING CLOSER) Please, Arnie, wait for me! Arnie, what's the matter? Arnie - why're ya just standing there? Why don't you open the door?

(SFX: IRMA'S FOOTSTEPS OUT)

ARNIE:

(TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE SITUATION, TO HIMSELF) Door - wasn't closed before.

IRMA:

Well, open it!

(SFX: ARNIE PULLS AT THE LOCKED DOOR IN VAIN)

ARNIE:

(PAUSE) It - it won't open. (BEAT) IT WON'T OPEN!

(SFX: GONG)

FRANK MARTIN:

Ladies and gentlemen, a moment of turning away from this strange story of "Sub-Basement." Yes, and in this moment of turning away from adventure, let's go to an entirely different scene.

(SFX: TYPEWRITERS CLACKING, THEN IN BG)

FRANK MARTIN:

An office, busy with the pressure of wartime work.

WORKER:

Well, sure, I'd like to put in more overtime and make more money, the same as the other fellas. I should be able to do it but - it's all I can do to keep working eight hours a day. Often at night, I feel too tired to enjoy my food. I'm jittery, I can't relax, losing sleep, losing weight. How it's goin' to end up, I don't know.

(SFX: TYPEWRITERS OUT)

FRANK MARTIN:

Well, if Vitamin B-1 and iron shortage is your trouble, try Ironized Yeast tablets. They supply both vital substances.

WORKER:

But - what makes 'em so vital?

FRANK MARTIN:

Why, when you don't get enough Vitamin B-1 from the food you eat, you may lose your appetite, not eat all you need, lose weight, lose pep and energy. And, without enough iron, you may be weak and pale, you may feel only half alive.

WORKER:

And you say Ironized Yeast tablets supply both of them?

FRANK MARTIN:

You bet they do. It's this two-way help that's been of such benefit to any number of people with these deficiencies. So, if you're short on Vitamin B-1 and iron, get Ironized Yeast tablets right

away. And see if pretty soon you don't say:

WORKER:

Oh, it's sure great to feel like myself again. That fagged-out feelin' is gone! I eat and sleep as I should once more. I'm sure glad I took Ironized Yeast.

FRANK MARTIN:

Now, back to our "Lights Out" story of "Sub-Basement" -- a man and his wife are far beneath the city streets in the tunnel leading to the sub-basement of a large department store.

(SFX: GONG ... AFTER A PAUSE, HURRIED FOOTSTEPS ... IRMA WHIMPERS IN FEAR, ARNIE BREATHES HARD AS THEY RUN ... THEN, FOOTSTEPS IN BG)

ARNIE:

All right, all right - we'll be there in a minute.

IRMA:

But are you sure we--?

ARNIE:

I tell you, it's an emergency exit. It's always kept open.

IRMA:

Why was that door locked?

ARNIE:

Stop asking me that! I don't know.

IRMA:

And that watchman?

ARNIE:

Stop talking, will ya?! I don't know anything. I - I -

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS OUT)

IRMA:

Arnie? Why did you stop talking? And why stop? You said the emergency exit--

ARNIE:

That's it.

IRMA:

What?

ARNIE:

Behind those timbers.

IRMA:

(GASPS)

ARNIE:

It's blocked off. You understand? It's blocked off!

IRMA:

But what do we do? We can't just stand here. Arnold, that man was killed! There's someone down here. I'm afraid. Oh, Arnold, get me out of here!

ARNIE:

Oh, wait a minute. Wait a minute! I've - I've got to think.

IRMA:

Think - ?

ARNIE:

Now, whoever killed Tom, not down here necessarily.

IRMA:

You don't think so, Arnie?

ARNIE:

Well, why should he be? Nothing to steal down here. Tom was always borrowing money from people. Somebody - he didn't pay back. Yeah, that's it!

IRMA:

But the doors?

ARNIE:

So? Well, he got out and closed the doors! What of it? We can get out. Come on.

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS AS THEY WALK)

IRMA:

Where?

ARNIE:

I told you, these tunnels lead to the buildings all over the business section. Follow the tunnel to the next sub-basement of the next building, we'll get out, that's all.

IRMA:

Arnie, don't get too far ahead of me this time.

ARNIE:

Oh, just walk fast, will ya?

IRMA:

Oh, Arnie, I looked forward so very much to tonight. It had been so long since you'd even thought about me. I knew that. And tonight when you called me up and told me to meet you here, and then when you started to play those crazy, scary jokes before, even then, I - then, I -

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS OUT)

ARNIE:

Irma - you - see it, too?

IRMA:

(BLOODCURDLING SCREAM)

(SFX: GONG)

(SFX: AFTER A PAUSE, HURRIED FOOTSTEPS IN)

IRMA:

Is it after us?

ARNIE:

Don't talk! Run!

IRMA:

Oh, my side is hurting!

ARNIE:

Well, that's too bad!

IRMA:

Arnie, don't leave me behind! Arnie, I can't run any faster! Arnie, wait!

(SFX: ARNIE'S FOOTSTEPS OUT AS HE FALLS TO THE FLOOR)

ARNIE:

(GROANS)

IRMA:

Arnie?!

ARNIE:

(GROANS IN PAIN)

IRMA:

Arnie, what? Ohhh, Arnie.

(SFX: IRMA'S FOOTSTEPS AS SHE RUSHES TO HIM AND KNEELS)

IRMA:

Ohh oh ohhhhh, I'm coming.

ARNIE:

(MORE GROANING)

IRMA:

Arnie, what? Your leg!

ARNIE:

(IN A LOT OF PAIN) Broken -- broken!

IRMA:

Oh, Arnie, come on!

ARNIE:

Can't!

IRMA:

Hold on to me. We'll manage.

ARNIE:

No - no, I can't.

IRMA:

But you can't lie here - that thing!

ARNIE:

It's coming?

IRMA:

I don't know. I can't see it.

ARNIE:

I was running - rock under my foot -

IRMA:

Arnold, over here - pile of boxes -

ARNIE:

What?

IRMA:

Hide behind them. If I help you, could you go over there--?

ARNIE:

Yes - yes, hide, hide. Give me your arm.

IRMA:

Yes, I will. Come on, dear. Hold on to me.

(SFX: A LONG STRUGGLE TO MOVE ARNIE A SHORT DISTANCE, IN BG)

ARNIE:

(GROANS) Oh, careful!

IRMA:

If you hold my hand tight--

ARNIE:

Hurts.

IRMA:

Come--

ARNIE:

Let's get over there--

IRMA:

Come on, I'll help you.

ARNIE:

Take it easy, will ya?

IRMA:

That's it. That's it. We're getting there.

ARNIE:

Hurts!

IRMA:

Back here. There.

ARNIE:

(GROANS) Help me down -

IRMA:

Yes.

ARNIE:

Easy -

IRMA:

Here you are. Oh, honey - There--

(SFX: THEY STOP STRUGGLING AND GASP BREATHLESSLY FOR A LONG MOMENT AND UNDER DIALOGUE:)

IRMA:

We'll be all right.

ARNIE:

Can you - can you see it?

IRMA:

No. No, it's gone. Just - just don't try to think about it, Arnie.

ARNIE:

What was it? (NO ANSWER) Irma, do you hear me? What was it? You went to school. You studied things like that. That thing - what was it? (NO ANSWER) Irma, didn't you hear me?

IRMA:

(FLAT) Yes, I heard you.

ARNIE:

What was it? What was it? Was - was it a lizard? Yes - some kind of a lizard - that's it - it was a lizard.

IRMA:

(FLAT) Some kind of a lizard.

ARNIE:

Well, why do you - why do you say it that way?

IRMA:

I saw it good, Arnie.

ARNIE:

Well?

IRMA:

In school - one of the books - there was an animal like that.

ARNIE:

How - how did it get down here, a lizard that big? I--

IRMA:

Well, no, you - you don't understand. Geology book - that thing wasn't a lizard exactly.

ARNIE:

Huh?

IRMA:

That was a - dinosaur.

ARNIE:

(QUIET DISBELIEF) Are you crazy?

IRMA:

No. I'm tellin' you what I saw. It sorta sat up on its hind feet - just like the picture in the book.

ARNIE:

What are you trying to do - make me crazy, too? Why, those things died millions o' years ago.

IRMA:

(SUDDENLY TENSE, WHISPERS) Arnie, look.

ARNIE:

Huh?

IRMA:

Way down the tunnel - by the light -

ARNIE:

(GASPS AS HE SEES IT)

IRMA:

It IS a dinosaur.

ARNIE:

Don't move.

IRMA:

Arnie, it IS a dinosaur!

(SFX: GONG)

IRMA:

(WEARILY) Has it gone away?

ARNIE:

(SIGHS, ALSO WEARY) I don't know.

IRMA:

It's been so long.

ARNIE:

Well - just don't move.

IRMA:

It just looked at us.

ARNIE:

Yeah.

IRMA:

Why doesn't it come after us? Why?

ARNIE:

Eh, maybe - maybe it didn't see us.

IRMA:

What?

ARNIE:

Well, it was - it was like something that'd been in the dark for a long, long time.

IRMA:

Yes. (GROAN)

ARNIE:

Don't move around!

IRMA:

Oh, there's - there's so little room back here.

ARNIE:

Well, would you rather go out there?

IRMA:

Don't be angry with me, Arnie.

ARNIE:

Angry? Why should I be angry? Irma - Irma, you went to school. You studied those things. You -

you - you called it a - a -

IRMA:

Dinosaur.

ARNIE:

Yeah. All these hours I - I've been thinking. How could a thing like that - which is supposed to have passed out of the world so many years ago - How could it be alive now?

IRMA:

I don't know.

ARNIE:

Irma. Listen, I know. This tunnel under the business district. They - they were putting on an extension, blasting in the rock. Maybe that thing came out from inside the earth.

IRMA:

Maybe.

ARNIE:

You're - you're not frightened, are you?

IRMA:

No.

ARNIE:

Why not?

IRMA:

Because I'm with you.

ARNIE:

(DARKLY) If it came back, what could I do for ya?

IRMA:

It's just - being with you.

ARNIE:

Yeah.

IRMA:

I keep thinking -

ARNIE:

Yeah, what?

IRMA:

That poor watchman.

ARNIE:

Yeah, it'll really be something when it's morning and everyone finds out about it.

IRMA:

What do you think they'll do?

ARNIE:

They'll hunt it down. Police'll get it soon enough.

IRMA:

Arnold?

ARNIE:

Yeah?

IRMA:

Arnold, what if it won't be here then?

ARNIE:

Huh?

IRMA:

It's been hours since we last saw it standing down there. What if it's gone back where it came from?

ARNIE:

That's all right with me.

IRMA:

But what if they're not--?

ARNIE:

They'll hunt it down, they'll find it.

(SFX: DISTANT ALARM BELL RINGS ... ARNIE CHUCKLES ... THE BELL STOPS)

IRMA:

Arnold, what's that?

ARNIE:

(RELIEVED) It's all right. Everything's all right.

IRMA:

But what was it?

ARNIE:

Six o'clock. That was the bell back in the basement. The day engineer turned off one of the sprinkler alarms.

IRMA:

Oh. Oh, Arnie, come on. Come on, I'll help you.

ARNIE:

No, wait!

IRMA:

But you said that there was--

ARNIE:

Wait! Look. Over there.

IRMA:

(GASPS IN FEAR)

ARNIE:

Back. It's back.

IRMA:

(CAN'T STOP HERSELF, SCREAMS) Help! Help! (ARNIE CLAMPS A HAND OVER HER MOUTH)

ARNIE:

Don't! Quiet, blast you. He's looking right at us. They didn't hear us, but IT did. It's - it's started this way.

IRMA:

Oh... (WHIMPERS INCOMPREHENSIBLY)

ARNIE:

(WINCES IN PAIN) My leg.

IRMA:

Arnie --

ARNIE:

Oh - how slowly - it's moving -

IRMA:

(WHIMPERS)

ARNIE:

As if it - as if it can hardly see. That's it, Irma. That's it.

IRMA:

What?

ARNIE:

It's blind. That thing is blind. It's lived under the earth so long, it can't see.

IRMA:

But it's still coming this way. Oh, Arnie, come on.

ARNIE:

I can't.

IRMA:

Hold on to me.

ARNIE:

Let me alone. Go ahead.

IRMA:

No, try. I'll carry you.

ARNIE:

Are you crazy? You can't carry me.

IRMA:

I will!

ARNIE:

Go ahead, Irma, go ahead, I tell you.

IRMA:

I won't go.

ARNIE:

Go on. Don't stay here, I tell you. Go on.

IRMA:

Oh, Arnie, please listen to me.

ARNIE:

Why should you stay here with me? I wanted to kill you tonight. Do you hear me? I brought you down here to kill you.

IRMA:

Oh, Arnie, no. You're only saying that.

ARNIE:

Blast you, I'm telling you the truth. I brought you down here to kill you.

IRMA:

No, Arnie. I'll stay with you. I won't let you--

ARNIE:

Will you listen to me?! I brought you down here to kill you. Now, that's the truth. Look at me and believe it because it's the truth.

IRMA:

That's why you--?

ARNIE:

That's why I suddenly got so wonderful. I was sick and tired of you. I'm sick and tired of living. So I brought you down here to kill you and then kill myself.

IRMA:

(DISBELIEF, SYMPATHY) Arnie.

ARNIE:

Look. Look at it out there. It's feeling its way along. Well, he'll take care of me, but you - you've got to get out of here, Irma.

IRMA:

No.

ARNIE:

You've got to get out! I deserve to die but, Irma, not you. You're so blasted good. I guess that's why I got tired of you but-- that's no reason for you to die. Irma, stop looking at me like that. You've got to get out! Run - straight down the tunnel - keep running and you'll get away. Irma, just don't look at me. Get going!

IRMA:

No, Arnold.

ARNIE:

Oh, why don't you say what you've always said to me all these years? "Just as you say, Arnie, just as you say." Oh, Irma, Irma, will you get out of here?!

IRMA:

How slowly it moves.

ARNIE:

Irma!

IRMA:

It IS blind.

ARNIE:

Oh, blast you. Look, will you listen to me, will you go? You've got to go. They'll think I've killed you.

IRMA:

No, they won't, they won't.

ARNIE:

Yes, they will. I left a note back home for the police. I told them I HAD killed you. If that thing kills you and me, they'll still think I was the one who did it. Now, d'you want me to be a murderer? D'you want that?

IRMA:

You left a note?

ARNIE:

Yes, yes. Don't you remember? I turned back after you went out the door - on the dining room table. Irma, get out of here and get that note. Don't make them think I killed you when I - I didn't. And I don't want to. You're such a good-- You're - you're too good for me and - I was tired and I - I was crazy. Don't make me a murderer, Irma.

IRMA:

Arnie - good-bye -

ARNIE:

Good-bye? Yes, Irma. Yes, hurry. Run fast - straight ahead. He won't get you, I promise.

IRMA:

Oh, Arnie--

ARNIE:

Go!

(SFX: IRMA'S FOOTSTEPS RUN OFF)

ARNIE:

(AFTER A PAUSE, A WEIRD MIXTURE OF COURAGE AND FEAR) All right - you blind thing, you. (NERVOUS CHUCKLE) Here I am. ... Yeah. Here I am. Here. I - I - I'm not scared, I-- Come and get me!

(SFX: GONG)

FRANK MARTIN:

All right, Mr. Oboler. You'll never get me down in my sub-basement again.

ARCH OBOLER:

On the contrary, Frank, I - I should imagine tonight's story would make you extremely curious about subterranean matters. Remember at the very start of the play I said something about the play happening because of something that had happened to me a very, very long time ago?

FRANK MARTIN:

Yes, of course I do.

ARCH OBOLER:

Well, the fact of the matter is, Frank, it happened when I was just a child. My going down into that sub-basement and the memory of it stayed with me all these years. It's those deep impressions we get as children which are truly wonderful. For a child sees with young, untired eyes and thinks with a young, untired mind. A child is constantly seeing the wonder of the world -- the sweet water falling out of the heavens; people's faces, no one of them exactly alike; and - and green things growing out of the earth with colors hanging over them; and - and the wonder of things being born out of nothingness and the equal wonder of sleep and awakening - and dying. These are the things which our older, tired minds, well-- The eyes forget to see and - the tired head forgets to think and marvel at.

FRANK MARTIN:

Now, have you anything to tell us so we can anticipate next week's play, Mr. Oboler?

ARCH OBOLER:

Yes, I - I think I can say without qualification that it's a play close to the thoughts of everyone listening in. But, first, a word from you, Frank.

FRANK MARTIN:

Friends, would you give a few pennies a day to regain your old-time pep and sparkle? Regain the pounds you need to feel and look like your old-time self? Then if, as with many others, Vitamin B-1 and iron shortage is all that's wrong, get Ironized Yeast tablets. Now, a rundown condition may stem from other causes. If in doubt, see your doctor. But, if you're simply short Vitamin B-1 and iron, remember: Ironized Yeast tablets supply both vital substances. They cost but a few pennies a day and you don't risk even those few pennies. For, if you don't begin to eat better, to look and feel stronger, peppier and more alive, the cost of the first bottle will be refunded to you in full by Ironized Yeast, Box IY, Rahway, New Jersey. And now what about next week, Mr. Oboler?

ARCH OBOLER:

Well, Frank, to live forever. To live forever. Which one among us has not thought of that? To live forever. Through these years and the next and the next and - all through space and all through time. That's what our play is about next week and its title: "The Immortal Gentleman." But that, as usual, is next week.

FRANK MARTIN:

Yes, tune in next Tuesday again for Arch Oboler's eerie story "The Immortal Gentleman." And if you need more Vitamin B-1 and iron, be sure to try Ironized Yeast. But remember, there's only one Ironized Yeast. You'll know it instantly by the yellow and orange package and by the big letters, IY, on the container and on each tablet.

(SFX: GONG)

(SFX: CHIMES)

VOICE:

(ON FIFTH CHIME) It - is - later - than - you - think ...

(SFX: CHIMES FADE OUT SLOWLY)

ANNOUNCER:

Ladies, if some of last night's dancing partners danced more "on" than "off" of your white shoes, forgive them, of course. Then get a bottle of the shoe white that does more than just whiten the surface -- Energine Shoe White! Energine Shoe White cleans as well as whitens - and it conditions the surface, so it goes on your shoes quickly and easily, makes them a smooth, all-over white. Ask for Energine Shoe White. This is the Columbia Broadcasting System.