

# JOE'S BRASS



by Keith Passmore

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# JOE'S BRASS

A Short Two Act Play

by

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## Joe's Brass

### Synopsis

Widower Stan has ordered an inorganic rubbish collection from the local council, which includes an occasional table, a rocking chair and cushion, and Joe's brass, his deceased father's euphonium. Stan watches over the pile in case locals decide to rummage through the various items. Having been accused of welching on a deal to sell the table, Stan meets a local market operator, Ted, who appears to have some expertise in auctioning antiques and relies on him to assist in the sale of the main items.

At first, it was discovered that Joe's Brass contained a horde of bank notes, but his father had decided to transfer the cash, including 'brass' perhaps, to the rocking chair cushion unbeknown to Stan. In the meantime, the rocking chair and the table are sold to young Annie, who is presented with the cushion free of charge.

Stan seems to have lost the cash, but has he? An interesting light comedic short two act play with very good characterisation and which provides excellent entertainment.

# Joe's Brass

## Characters

Stan

George

Floss

Annie

Ted

Molly

PC Spencer

## Act One

*A morning in the Spring of 2010*

Scene 1: The front garden at Stan's three bedroom 1970's house on the border of North West Kent, England.

*The garden consists of a wide lawn from the front of the house to the kerb. The house itself can be shown on a backdrop since there are no scenes of the interior.*

*There is an exit at UR to Stan's back garden.*

*There is a trellis which separates Stan and Molly's houses, which runs from UL to halfway DL. From which there is an exit to Molly's garden behind the trellis.*

*There are also exits at DR and DL at kerb level.*

*At DC is a pile of inorganic rubbish covered by a blue plastic sheet.*

*Stan enters UR. He is retired, in his early sixties. He wears a check shirt and a multi coloured sleeveless woollen jumper, which has seen better days. He also wears blue trousers and casual shoes.*

*He approaches the rubbish, removes the sheet, folds it and places it on the ground behind the pile. Stan sits in the rocking chair which is resting on a small wooden pallet in the middle of the pile of rubbish. He can be clearly seen by the audience. Beside him is a small round occasional table, part of the rubbish pile, upon which is a newspaper, a lunch box and a vacuum flask. He unrolls the newspaper and holds it up so that his face cannot be seen and reads.*

*George, a neighbour, about the same age as Stan, enters DL. He wears a brown jacket, fawn trousers, open neck white shirt and casual shoes.*

*He strolls, hands in pockets, in front of Stan, without noticing him. He stops, looks at the pile of rubbish and slowly shakes his head. He continues to cross DR.*

*Stan coughs from behind the newspaper, which slightly alarms George, and he turns in the direction of Stan, who does not lower his newspaper.*

George: What the.... Is that you Stan?

Stan: *(from behind the newspaper)* It is.

George: What're you doing?

Stan: Reading the paper.

George: Why are you sitting amongst this lot for?

Stan: *(lowering newspaper)* I thought If I sat reading my paper away from the pile of rubbish, I might be interrupted by passers-by asking many questions. I thought, perhaps they wouldn't notice me if I became part of the pile.

George: I noticed you. It wasn't difficult.

Stan: Yes, well, you're clever, aren't you? Anyway, it's cosy sitting here.

*Stan resumes reading the newspaper*

*George throws him a strange look, shakes his head and crosses to him.*

George: You're not going to sit there all day, are you?

Stan: Why not?

George: Isn't it unhygienic?

*Stan lowers his newspaper*

Stan: No, It's inorganic. There's no foodstuffs, garden material or animal shit amongst it. You can't smell anything can you?

George: No, no.

Stan: There we are, I'm pleased.

George: You realise you're the only person in the street who's put out rubbish.

Stan: I phoned the council last week and placed an order for a collection. I was surprised how easy it was.

George: You were lucky, you must know someone on the council.

*Stan chuckles and shakes his head.*

Stan: I put the rubbish out yesterday evening and thought I'd guard the pile in case some of our thoughtful locals spread it across the lawn.

*Stan resumes reading the newspaper*

*George sighs heavily*

George: I've been visiting my daughter. I got back last night.

Stan: Oh, that's nice.

George: No, there's nothing nice about it. She wants to return home now that Muriel has left me.

Stan: She finally left then?

George: It was on the cards.

Stan: I'm sorry to hear it.

George: We seem to have drifted apart after my retirement. She accused me of being a cantankerous old fool.

Stan: Yes, so you said last time I saw you.

George: She was fed up with my attitude. Got old before my time, she said.

Stan: So much for death us do part.

George: She's met someone else, I'm certain of it.

*Stan lowers the newspaper*

Stan: That wasn't mentioned in your vows then?

George: What d'yer mean?

Stan: Until the next one comes along we do part.

George: I know, it seems that way, but I never thought it would ever happen to us. I can't see how we could live together again, but I'll never stop trying.

Stan: I'm sorry George, I didn't mean to be flippant. It's a great shame, but don't try too hard. Are you sure she's gone off with another man?

George *(irritably and dismissively)* Oh, I dunno.

Stan: I don't wish to be rude, but she's getting on a bit, yer know. Better the devil she knows and all that. I reckon she'd be a fool to leave you.

George: Yes, but I suppose I'll soon find out.

Stan: I'm sure it'll all turn out right for you George.

*Short pause*

George: Her coming back could be bloody disastrous.

Stan: But you just said.. *(a sudden realisation)* Oh, you mean your daughter.

George: *(irritably)* Yes.

*Stan folds the newspaper and places it in the pile.*

Stan: Then you should lay down some rules, George.

George: *(unconvincingly)* Of course.



*George circles Stan, looking at the rubbish collection. Stan stands and watches George. A large, plump, colourful, decorative cushion can be seen on the rocking chair.*

Stan: If you fancy something let me know, but the rocking chair isn't for sale.

George: For sale? You're not thinking of selling these things are you?

Stan: Why not? Just over two hours ago a woman asked me about the small table there. She was prepared to pay thirty - five quid for it. I had a feeling it was worth more, but I felt sorry for her. Why, I don't know. She didn't have any cash, and wanted to fob me off with a cheque. Anyway, I said I'd give her ten minutes to come up with the cash. Haven't seen her since.

George: It's in good nick.

Stan: Oh, are you interested?

George: Well....

Stan: *(interrupting)* I expect you to offer me something. I'm not giving it away.

George: But if the council has arranged to pick it up today...

Stan: *(interrupting)* Which they won't. They're coming on Friday.

George: So you'll be sitting there on and off for the next three or four days.

Stan: I'll see how it goes.

George: Oh *(he takes a closer look at the table)* It's a nice piece of furniture. I'll give you thirty-five in cash, but I'd have to go home and get it.

*Stan chuckles*

Stan: *(firmly)* No, you can have it for sixty.

George: What? But you were prepared to accept.....

Stan: *(interrupting)* Well, the woman seemed so eager. I felt sorry for her at the time, but her long delay made me rethink.

George: At the time she probably knew she'd get a very fine piece of furniture at a bargain price.

Stan: Yes and that's why I'm asking you for sixty. It's solid oak, I think. Nice design, well crafted; sixty's about right.

George: No, It's not oak. Looks more like mahogany.

Stan: Does it?

*Stan inspects it.*

George: I believe I know a good piece of mahogany when I see it.

Stan: If it's good then, give me sixty. All it needs is a polish.

George: It's too much for me.

Stan: You can afford it.

George: No, sorry.

George: You'll be getting rent from your daughter next week.

George: O yeah? I'll probably have to chase her for it.

*Stan returns to the rocking chair and sits. He drinks from the vacuum flask.*

George: I don't know how you can expect sixty from me.

Stan: It's a business transaction George. In any case you're not a friend are yer?

George: What? Well, I thought I was.....

Stan: *(interrupting and smiling)* No, you're not a friend, you're a neighbour. Neighbours and business don't mix.

George: Oh? But I've known you for.....

Stan: *(interrupting)* How often have you knocked on my door and asked me to go for a drink at the local? Come to think of it, when have you ever offered me a drink? Then again, when have you ever bought me one? Friends do that, you know.

George: I could say the same about you.

*Stan laughs*

Stan: There we are then. You can't say we're friends. Friendly yes, but not friends as such.

*He places the vacuum flask on the ground by the pallet*

George: I didn't say we were.

Stan: I think you thought we were.

.

George: Perhaps I did, I dunno.

*Stan chuckles*

George: Are you having me on?

Stan: Course I am. You're a good man, George. I enjoy your company.

.

George: Alright then Stan, d'yer fancy going for a drink and a bite to eat at lunch time?

Stan: Normally I would George, but I must look after this pile. Perhaps we'll have lunch together soon.

*George groans and shakes his head.*

George: I'll see you later on.

Stan: If you decide to pay sixty for the table, don't leave it too late.

George: No, I won't even think about it.

*He crosses DR and as he is about to exit Stan calls after him.*

Stan: If you go to the pub bring me back a large can of lager will you?

*George returns the call*

George: You'll be lucky!

*Stan chuckles*

*George exits DR*

Stan: *(to himself, smiling)* He's right, I would be lucky.

*He stands, retrieves the newspaper from the pile, returns to the rocking chair fluffs up the cushion, sits and reads.*

*Floss and her daughter Annie enter DL. Floss is in her late forties. Her hair is dyed blonde. She wears a colourful blouse, tight black jeans and block heeled sandals.*

*Annie is in her early twenties. She is a tall blonde and wears a short sleeved long T shirt which reaches her knees. Underneath she wears tight blue jeans. She also wears trainers.*

*Floss calls across to Stan*

Floss: I'm glad you're still 'ere, I've come for the table.

*Stan stands, folds the newspaper, places it in the pile and crosses to her.*

Stan: You're too late.

Floss: What? What d'ya mean? We 'ad a deal. I've got the firty - five quid.

Stan: You said you'd only be ten minutes. That was over two hours ago.

Annie: Oh Gawd, so you've sold it, 'ave ya?

Stan: (*addressing Annie*) Who're you?

Floss: Me daughter Annie. She's come to give me some support, in case ya become difficult.

Annie: And you'd better not be.

Stan: You're wasting your time. I've got somebody interested.

Annie: So yer 'aven't sold it.

Stan: I can get sixty for it now, perhaps more.

Floss: But we 'ad a deal.

Stan: You heard what I said.

Floss: I 'ad to wait for Annie 'ere to give me a lift to the bank.

Stan: You should've told me earlier.

Floss: 'Ow, by runnin' back to ya? I'm not a bloody marafon runner yer know!

Stan: I'm sorry, the table's worth sixty. That's the price. At the moment.

Floss: What d'yer mean, at the moment?

Stan: If you were that interested you'd make me a better offer. Sixty or more perhaps.

Floss: Sixty or more? I wasn't born yesterday ya know.

Annie: Ya already 'cepted me Mum's offer.

Stan: She was too late coming up with the cash.

*Floss shakes her head sadly and crosses to and inspects the pile of rubbish. Stan watches her.*

*Annie follows her and rocks the rocking chair.*

Stan: The rocking chair's not for sale.

Annie: What's the matter wiv ya? Why not?

Stan: That's my business. You can have the cushion for ten quid.

Annie: (*scoffing*) You must be jokin'. It's no good wivout the rockin' chair is it?

Floss: Come on, 'ow much d'yer want for the rocker?

Stan: I said, It's not for sale. In any case I'm not waiting another two hours while you go to the bank again.

Floss: I don't 'ave to now, do I? I drew out a good bit of cash. I said earlier what a miserable sod ya were; I could now use uvver words.

Stan: Insulting me won't get you the table or the rocker. As I said, offer me sixty for the table and I might let you have that.

Floss: We agreed on a price. I really 'ope you don't get a buyer. I 'ope you never sell it.

Stan: We'll have to see won't we.

Floss: I'm not interested in sellin' it on, yer know. I'd 'ave it for meself. I can picture it in me front room. It'd look good in there.

*Ted, in his forties, enters from DR. He is tall, wears his hair long and is dressed in a sweatshirt, blue jeans and trainers.*

Ted: Hallo Floss, what're you doing here? How're things Annie?

*Annie pulls a face at him*

Ted: Charmin'.

Floss: (*pointing at Stan*) 'E accepted my offer on a purchase and then welched on it.

Ted: *(to Stan)* Morning. Stan isn't it? Ted's my name. I live down the road.

*Ted holds out his hand, which Stan shakes*

Stan: Hello Ted. Yes, I've seen you about.

Ted: *(to Floss)* What's all this business? *(to Stan)* Is she giving you strife? Me and her are market sellers. *(he chuckles)* Marketeers we are.

Floss: As I mentioned, 'e welched on a deal.

Stan: She'll only tell you half of it.

Annie: It's simple. 'E accepted me mum's offer of fifty- five quid and now me mum's turned up with the cash, 'e's changed 'is mind.

Stan: The sale was conditional on payment of thirty five pounds in cash within ten minutes. I made that very clear. If you're back in ten minutes we'll have a deal. That's what I said.

Floss: *(firmly)* No 'e didn't! And in any case nuffin' in the world rises so quick in price after only two 'ours.

Ted: Huh.You'd be surprised Floss.

Stan: I knew I could get more for the table, but at the time I felt sorry for her.

Floss: Feelin' sorry for me? Huh! I bet ya were.

Stan: God knows why. I suppose you could say my kindness wore thin after two hours. I've had enough of this.*(to Floss)* Why can't you just leave and accept that you were too late?

Floss: But ya ain't gotta buyer yet. Annie, can ya 'elp me?

*Annie quickly crosses to the rubbish pile and half sits on the table, as though she were guarding it.*

Stan: *(angrily)* Oy! Get off.

Annie: You, takin' the firty five smackers will make me get orf.

*Stan crosses to the pile.*

Ted: *(to Annie)* You'll damage it.

*Ted crosses to them*

*Floss takes cash from the breast pocket of her blouse and waves the notes at Stan.*

Floss: 'ere it is, the full amount we agreed on! Take it.

Stan: *(threateningly to Annie)* Get away from the table young woman. *(to Floss)* How many times must I say it, you were too late!

*Annie shakes her head.*

Annie: You'll 'ave to try an' force me.

Stan: *(extremely angry)* Much as I'd hate to harm any woman, If you don't get off the table and my property now, I'll drag you off.

Annie: 'arm me? Drag me orf? If ya so much as touch me, you miserable sod, I'll get the police on ya.

Ted: Come on Floss, Annie, you've made your point. You're taking it too far. If you really want the table you should offer him more.

Floss: No, the deal was firty- five quid. Annie'll be staying put until 'e takes me money *(to Stan)* Come on, firty-five quid!

Annie: Mum, you should get a good price for it in the market, so offer 'im a bit more.

Stan: *(scoffing)* A bit more?

Floss: Annie, you're supposed to be agreein' wiv me! I told ya I ain't goin' to sell it. Just a lick of paint will make it look special in my lounge.



Ted: What? (*alarmed*) No!

Stan: Are you really thinking of painting it?

Floss: That's what I said.

Annie: You're jokin' aint' ya?

Floss: I wanna give it a distressed look.

Stan: I'm just imagining how it would distress me.

Annie: You ain't' paintin' it Mum. You just can't do it. It'd be criminal!

Floss: I bloody well am!

Ted: The table will lose its value, if you do. Come on, think about it.

Floss: It'll mean a lot to me, Ted.

Ted: You'll ruin it!

Annie: Course ya will. For once 'e's right.

*Ted scoffs and shakes his head.*

Ted: I'm not often wrong darling.

*Annie stands*

Floss: Annie, what're ya doin'?

*Stan hurries to the table and Annie, off guard, tumbles to the ground with a yelp. She sits up moaning.*

Annie: You attacked me ya daft sod!

Floss: What d'ya fink you're doin'?

Ted: Oh dear.

Stan: I never touched her *(to Annie)* You just lost your balance and fell.

Annie: You made me fall!

*Floss crosses to her and helps her to her feet. Annie does so gingerly and brushes herself down with her hands. She gently rubs her bottom.*

*Stan grabs the table.*

*Floss turns on him.*

Floss: You assaulted 'er.

Stan: Course I didn't; did you see me touch her?

*Stan places the table to the R of the pile and guards it with his body.*

Floss: 'and it over, else I'll call the police!

Stan: *(scoffs)* You'll call the police? I'm the one who should be doing that.

Ted: Come on now girls.

Floss: Don't ya girl me!

Stan: Oh, don't be stupid, woman.

Floss: Stupid am I? We'll see about that! Right, Annie, get the table.

*Stan moves it further away*

Annie: No, I don't fink so Mum. I can't let ya paint it.

Floss: Ya silly cow! I'll do what I like wiv it.

Annie: I 'ave to live wiv it too ya know! It's a smashin' piece of furniture. Real class.

Ted: She's right Floss.

*Stan confronts Floss*

Stan: Now you can get off my property. You won't change my mind no matter how hard you try.

Annie: Come on Mum, you're wasting your time, let's get out of 'ere.

Floss: No, I won't go without the table.

Annie: Then make 'im a better offer, but for gawd's sake, promise me ya won't paint it. It's lovely as it is.

Floss: A bloody fine one you are. You're supposed to be 'elpin' me.

*Annie rubs her bottom and moans*

Floss: What's up wiv ya?

Annie: I didn't expect it to end like this. Me bum really 'urts.

Floss: You're useless. *(giving Annie a push)* Go on then, let's go 'ome.

*Annie cautiously crosses DL. with Floss who turns on Stan*

Floss: *(at the top of her voice)* If she's badly injured, you'll be 'earin' furver from me!

*Floss gives Annie another push, who gives a brief cry of pain, and the following dialogue is in earshot of Stan and Ted, who shake their heads.*

Annie: *(miserably)* Don't ya push me again. Ooh, it hurts!

Floss: You're pafetic, girl.

Annie: I'm sore, that's what I am.

Floss *(as she exits DL)* You've always been a pain in the arse!

Annie: (*following her*) Take after you then don't I?

Floss: (*off*) You're not too old for a clump from me, ya know.

Annie: ( *off*) You just try it!

*Stan and Ted look at each other. Ted chuckles. Stan shakes his head and runs a hand through his hair.*

Stan: The girl wasn't hurt that much. It was a big act. D'you know Ted it was a wonder we didn't have any onlookers.

Ted: Oh, we might well have had if Floss had carried on much longer. She felt humiliated because for once she didn't get her own way.

*Stan looks at his hands*

Stan: I'm shaking. I hate losing my temper. I haven't done that for ages.

Ted: Pr'aps you could do with a cuppa.

Stan: No, I'll be alright. D'you know, I'm beginning to wish I'd never put this bloody rubbish out.

Ted: Something stronger, pr'aps.

Stan: What? No, no, it's too early for me.

Ted: I've got stalls at the local Wednesday and Sunday markets, you know in Edmund Street. Floss has got one on a Wednesday. If you like, I'll have a word with her tomorrow, and see how Annie is.

Stan: Yes, but I don't want a big issue made of it. Cor, I need to sit down .

*He crosses to the rubbish pile and places the vacuum flask on the table. He sits in the rocking chair and sighs heavily. Ted approaches him.*

Stan: That's better.

Ted: I don't mind making you a cup of tea.

Stan: That's good of you, but I'll be OK. I just hope the girl is too.

Ted: She'll be fine. As you said, it was a big act.

*Ted crosses R to the occasional table and Stan stands and crosses to him.*

*Ted studies the table*

Ted: You should be able to get over a hundred for this.

Stan: What, are you sure? Would you believe anyone wanting to paint it?

Ted: Floss wouldn't have much idea about its quality or its real value. If she finds out how much she could get for it she'd change her mind. I reckon if this was in better nick, you'd easily get about a hundred and twenty five.

Stan: Really?

Ted: I can normally spot a good item of furniture and this is pretty good.

Stan: Make me an offer then.

*Ted laughs*

Ted: No, sorry. If I didn't know you, I'd offer you between sixty and seventy - five, but of course, now you know what you might get for it, you wouldn't be interested.

Stan: But I wouldn't have been any the wiser.

*Ted laughs*

Ted: Yes, that's true.

Stan: I'd accept seventy. How about that?

Ted: No. To make a decent profit I'd want to put a price of a hundred or more on it and if I did my regular punters would run a mile. I can't remember when I last had a real antique buyer visiting my stall.

Stan: What should I do then?

*Ted further examines the table during his reply.*

Ted: There's a few marks on it, scuffs and the like, but I reckon if you gave it a good polish, you know, you should then put it up for auction.

Stan: Is it old?

*Ted chuckles*

Ted: Older than you (*examining the table again*) it's Edwardian, about 1910. Definitely mahogany. It's an occasional table, of course. Originally, it might have been used as a lamp table. What did you use it for?

Stan: It was in our front room. Originally, it belonged to my wife's mother. It ended up in our loft.

Ted: As I said, auction it. Of course, you'll have the auctioneer's fees to pay, but they'll be deducted from the sale price. I'd put a reserve of a hundred on it, if I were you. It's always a bit of a gamble. It depends on who the bidders are and what they're after on the day.

Stan: Couldn't I auction it online?

Ted: It'd be more exciting attending an auction. If you do it often, it sort of gets into the blood.

Stan: You obviously know what you're talking about.

Ted: I worked in antiques for a time, some years ago, of course. As for dear Floss, she tries it on, ripping people off who've no idea. I'm glad you didn't give in and sell it to her. Let me know if you want to auction it and I'll help you out.

Stan: OK, thanks Ted.

Ted: Now then, have you any more surprises, apart from the rocking chair? By the way, you might get two hundred for that. Rocking chairs are very collectable at the moment.

Stan: Two hundred?

Ted: Oh yes and the cushion would set it off nicely.

Stan: I'd better not sit on it any more then. I think the cushion's a bit bulky, though.

Ted: Yes, well, If I were you I wouldn't leave the table and the rocker out here overnight.

Stan: No, I won't.

Ted: You never know who might be snooping about. (*Ted laughs*) Floss might organise a raid.

*They chuckle*

Ted: Could I have a look through the pile?

Stan: Why not. There's an old euphonium, if you're interested..

Ted: (*amazed*) Euphonium?

*Stan smiles broadly*

Stan: Yes, it's like a small tuba.

Ted: Yes, I've seen one, but I've never had anything to do with them.

*Stan removes the euphonium, which is in a large plastic bag, from the pile and shows it to Ted, who briefly inspects it by peering into the bag.*

Stan: I got rid of its case. It was falling apart.

*Ted hands it back to Stan.*

*Ted chuckles*

Ted: Where did you find it?

Stan: It was my Dad's. He used to play it in a local brass band. He was often up north playing in competitions. The family and friends referred to the euphonium as Joe's Brass, after my Dad. 'Give us a blast Joe!' his friends would ask. 'Nah, you don't appreciate good music' he would reply.. He stopped playing in his late sixties. Ran out of breath, he said (*he chuckles*) and he was ninety when he passed away, a year ago this coming June.

Ted: He had a good innings. Did he live here with you?

*During the following conversation Ted looks through the rest of the pile at the same time taking in what Stan says with appropriate gestures and nodding.*

Stan: For about four years. I did my best to look after him. He used to live in Wandsworth, where I was born. He sold the house and, apart from keeping some of the proceeds for himself, he divided the rest between me and my two brothers. One lives in Canada and the other used to live in Norfolk. The old man didn't hear from them again and never received a word of thanks.

*Ted shakes his head slowly.*

*Stan quietly nods.*

Stan: Dad was devastated, but he didn't say much about it. Laura, my wife, thought the world of him. D'you know I hated the racket that euphonium made. I was so pleased when he stopped playing. Now it's stuffed with newspaper and old music sheets.

Ted: What about your wife?

Stan: She died a year after Dad moved in. Cancer. She only lasted six months. So quick.

Ted: Poor woman. Poor you, Stan.

Stan: She was a brave lass. I miss her a lot, of course.

Ted: I bet you do.



*Short pause. Both men are momentarily deep in thought.*

Ted: Er, well, I'm not sure how much the euphonium's worth. Some enthusiasts might want it.

Stan: As long as they don't move in next door to me.

Ted: I'll make some enquiries if you like. I know someone who is tied up with a local brass band; a conductor I think he is.. I'll take it to him and see if he's any idea. That's if you're prepared to trust me with it.

Stan: Of course I trust you.

*Stan hands him the bag containing the euphonium.*

Ted: OK, I'll try and get hold of him tomorrow.

Stan: That'd be good.

*Ted takes a business card out of his back pocket and hands it to Stan.*

Ted: Here's my card, in case you need to contact me.

*Stan examines the card and places it in his own back pocket.*

Stan: I'm glad you showed up.

Ted: Before I go I'll give you a hand with the rocker and the table.

Stan: I can manage.

Ted: No, come on.

*Stan picks up the occasional table, Ted places the euphonium by the side of the pile, lifts the rocking chair and follows Stan UR.*

Ted: You never know that euphonium could be worth a fair bit.

Stan: (*dubiously*) I should be so lucky.

Ted: As I said Stan, you never know.

*Lights down slowly as the scene ends*

Scene 2 - The same scene in the early evening.

*The rocking chair has been replaced by an old Director's chair, which is on the pallet. The occasional table and the euphonium are no longer in the pile.*

*The sound of an active lawn mower from off stage*

*Molly, Stan's next door neighbour is looking through the pile. She is in her fifties, with short greying dark hair. She wears a colourful blouse and casual slacks, and soft slip on shoes.*

*The sound of the mower ceases and Stan enters UR. He crosses to the pile. He sees Molly, who is studying a metal vase in her hands.*

Stan: Evening Molly.

Molly: Oh, I hope you don't mind me looking through this lot.

*She replaces the metal vase in the collection.*

Stan: Course not, take your time. I'll just put the mower away.

*He crosses UR .*

Molly: I hope I haven't prevented you from working.

Stan: No, no. I've finished out the back.

*Stan exits UR with the mower.*

*Molly resumes her search through the pile.*

*She picks up a small wooden jewellery box. She tries to open it without success. She also picks up a decorative straw shopping bag and admires the flowers decorating it.*

*She places the box in the bag.*

*Stan enters UR and approaches Molly. He notices the bag.*

Molly: This is a lovely bag, Stan.

*Stan smiles*

Stan: We bought it in Italy, a couple of years before Laura passed away.

Molly: Don't you want to keep it in memory of her?

Stan: It's OK, I've got a marvellous collection of memorabilia of our times together.

*Molly smiles*

Molly: Are you sure?

Stan: Yes, of course. If you want the bag, just take it.

Molly: Thanks, it's lovely. I would like to have met your wife.

Stan: I thought you knew her.

Molly: Come on Stan, I've only lived here for about eighteen months.

Stan: Really, it seems so much longer.

*Molly chuckles*

Stan: *(quickly)* I'm sorry, I didn't mean....

Molly: *(interrupting)* No, no, time slips away so quickly, doesn't it?

Stan: *(reflectively)* It certainly does.