

STILL LIFE

BEFORE YOU DELETE

A play by Phil Lewis

This play requires permission to perform and a performance fee

SHORTENED **SAMPLE** VERSION

For full version please contact:

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Approx. 7 minutes.

CAST:

ANITA: Elderly woman

SET:

Single chair and spotlight.

BEFORE YOU DELETE

(OPENING MUSIC.

LIGHTS UP AS ANITA ENTERS AND SITS)

ANITA: I finally got a computer. Me!

I struggled at first, as they said I would. But a nice young man was patient with me and showed be how to do emails.

I asked him, “Why do you click on START to EXIT Microsoft Windows?”

He said he didn’t know and laughed.

Well....why did I wait for so long?

I’m on the computer everyday, for hours sometimes. I’m talking to people all over the world. Friends I haven’t contacted for years. We’re in touch now almost daily. Wonderful. Just wonderful.

And...I have a webcam. Yes. You know what that is don’t you? You can see people on the screen and they can see and hear you. Anywhere in the world.

Yesterday I saw my grandson in Australia. He spoke to me. And I spoke to him. It was wonderful.

I can’t get out much these days. Going to the shops is a lengthy business. So the computer is a Godsend. And not expensive to run, either. It doesn’t use much electricity, apparently. And I’m all for that.

We’re making a right mess of the planet and anything I can do to help save it I will. Take emails, for example. A very good example.

I know some people, especially in business, complain that their lives have been taken over by emails. First thing in the morning to last thing at night we have to know who’s contacted us and what about.

With telephones you have to be there to take the call. Be there in real time. We emails you can time shift. Still be expedient in response, not necessarily in real time. And yet still efficiently.

Your day can be scheduled better. Less phone interruptions (unless it’s the dreaded mobile – where most calls seem to be pointless and puerile).

In the same way that CB radio was killed off by kids using the technology as a game – so mobile phones will be viewed as an adolescent form of communication, that couldn’t grow up with the users.

The down side of emails is that there's a lot of spam. One man was recently arrested for sending out over four million a day. This aspect can waste an hour or two of the day. Sending copious jokes to multiple friends can waste the rest.

However, just look at the alternative – the letter.

The paper - a tree has to die for that.

Ink - full of toxins and non-biodegradable colouring.

The envelope – more paper and ink.

The stamp – more paper, phosphor and ink.

Then the journey to the post box – probably by car these days, larger carbon footprint.

It has to be collected by a postman, in a van - enlarging further the carbon footprint.

Taken to a sorting office where several people have to sort into dispatch areas. These people have to get to work and probably drive too- more carbon footprints.

The mail then goes on a train, plane or lorry – more carbon footprint.

Another sorting office where more people have to drive to work to help out.

Then it has to be delivered through your letterbox by a postman. In rural areas by van - carbon again. Normally on a bike. Sometimes on foot. Size ten footprint.

You read the letter and you throw it away. So our waste increases and it slowly degrades over a period of hundred years or so.

On top of all that – you probably feel you have to answer the letter and the whole process starts again.

So, the next time you post a letter, plant a tree.

EDITED