

Walt and Laura's Front Porch

By Eleanor Kennedy

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What's keeping you positive: Hope for a vaccine

Yes you can publish this

CHARACTERS

WALT, just an average guy, hair getting a little thin; times have been hard, but he tries to stay positive

LAURA, just an average woman who loves her husband

HARRISON, a sharp operator

TIME

Any time before the end of the world, really

PLACE

Walt and Laura's front parlor

A front parlor, with a door leading out to the front porch. The furniture is worn, even a little shabby, but the room is neat. An old trumpet hangs from a hook on the back wall.

A crashing noise is heard outside

WALT (from offstage)
Dagnabbit!

LAURA runs on

LAURA
Walt?

Front door opens. WALT enters, limping.

WALT
Well, it's happened. Dang front porch gave way.

LAURA
Oh no!

WALT
Foot went straight through. Almost dropped right in.

LAURA
Are you all right?

WALT
Yes, yes. No harm done. But it's gonna cost some to get it repaired. Wood's rotten all through. The whole thing has to be replaced.

LAURA
Oh, dear.

WALT
Now, Laura, I know you don't want to—

LAURA
Walt, no.

WALT

But this is an emergency situation. I know it's been in your family for generations—

LAURA

Pease don't say it.

WALT

—but we're going to have to sell that antique trumpet of yours.

LAURA

Walt, I can't.

WALT

It's the only thing we own that's worth any money.

LAURA

We'll find another way. We always have.

WALT

I don't see how this time. We have nothing left to sell.

LAURA

Maybe we can—

There is a knock on the door.

HARRISON (offstage)

Excuse me. Hello?

Walt opens the door to reveal HARRISON standing on the porch

WALT

Yes? What can I do for you?

HARRISON

Hi, there. My name's Harrison Broadhurst of Harrison's Vintage and Collectibles. Nasty hole in your porch there. May I come in?

Without waiting he pushes into the room, handing Walt a card on his way in.

WALT

Well...

HARRISON

I'm in the neighborhood, going around, seeing if you have any old items you'd be willing to sell. I pay top dollar.

WALT

You know, it's funny you should mention that.

LAURA

Yes. Funny.

HARRISON

(sees the trumpet)

Say... would you look at that. Oh, that's a beautiful instrument. Do you mind if I have a closer look?

He reaches for the trumpet. Laura walks over quickly and takes it off the wall, holding it close.

LAURA

I most certainly do mind.

WALT

Now, Laura, I'm sure he'll be careful with it.

HARRISON

You know, even from here, I can see it's a valuable piece. I'll give you ten thousand cash for it, as-is, right here and now.

Harrison takes a fat roll of bills out of his pocket and places them on the table

WALT

Ten thousand?

LAURA

Put your money away. We don't want it.

WALT

Laura. It's ten thousand. I know you're fond of that old trumpet, but think of all the repairs we could make with that.

HARRISON

Money like that could change your life.

LAURA

I like my life just fine the way it is.

HARRISON

Oh, come on. I'm sure you haven't played it in years. Why keep it hidden here, just hanging on your wall? Let it go to someone who can really play the hell out of it. Ten thousand will buy a lot of things, Gabby.

WALT

(laughing) Gabby! That's a good one. Hey, Laura, he thinks you look like a Gabby.

LAURA

Mr. Harrison, do you buy dolls?

HARRISON

Sure, sure. Anything.

LAURA

Walt, I have an old doll up in the attic. Will you go get it please? It's in one of the old trunks.

WALT

Sure thing, "Gabby".

Walt exits, laughing

HARRISON

He doesn't know, does he?

Laura's whole demeanor changes. Even her voice sounds different.

LAURA

How did you find me?

HARRISON

Devil's luck. I really was just in the neighborhood... shopping.

LAURA

For souls.

HARRISON

And vintage collectables. It's actually a nice little business. You'd be surprised how many people don't have a clue of the value of what they have. And then I heard your man speak those beautiful words "nothing left to sell". That's my cue. Walked in and made the find of a lifetime.

LAURA

And now?

HARRISON

Why don't you hand over the trumpet, and I won't tell the mortal who you really are, Gabriel. Hell, I'll even throw in the ten thousand as a gift. Fix up this shack.

LAURA

You're threatening me? You come into my house and threaten me? You don't even know the power of this trumpet. It does more than just sound the end of times. It has... other properties.

Laura plays the trumpet, a catchy swing tune. Makes you want to get up and dance. In fact, Harrison does start to dance, almost unconsciously, then realizes what he's doing and tries to stop. He can't. He is dancing vigorously now.

HARRISON

Hey. Hey, what are you... stop. Stop! (Laura plays him towards the door). All right, you win. Stop that playing. Please. Stop it. I don't even like swing.

Laura plays him out the door. We hear a crash.

LAURA

And if you come back, in any guise, you'll get more of the same. This house, and Walt, are off limits, unless you want to be dancing for eternity.

She blows one more hot blast on the trumpet and slams the door. Walt comes back in.

WALT

Sorry, honey, I couldn't find any doll up there. Where'd he go?

LAURA

Oh, well, you know, I got to talking with that nice Mr. Harrison, and I told him just how much that trumpet meant to me, and how long it had been in my family, and he was so moved he said for us to keep it. He even left the money for us. Told us to keep it anyway.

WALT

Really?

LAURA

He was very moved.

WALT

Well, what a nice fella. There's more than enough here to get the porch fixed, with some left over. Say, you know what we ought to do? I don't know why, but when I was up in the attic just now, I felt like dancing. We should go out dancing somewhere. Have ourselves a night on the town.

LAURA

Why, Walt. Whatever put that in your head?

WALT

I don't know. It just kind of came to me.

LAURA

Well, you do think of the darnedest things. I'll get your lunch.

WALT

I'm so lucky to have you. You're my angel from heaven.

LAURA

Oh, Walt.

CURTAIN