**Lost Property**

(a 5 minute stage drama by Claire Booker)

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 **Characters**

 Annie: An emotional young woman, dressed in black.

 Derek: A cheerfully officious man, in uniform.

 **Props and Set**

There is a small desk/table stage left, on which stands a computer keyboard (non functional). A simple wooden chair stands nearby. Props include a handbag; tape measure; small, framed photograph; a brass instrument e.g trombone (alternatively a music stand); plus any large, eye-catching object.

 *A clock ticks and then stops. Spotlight on Annie, centre stage. She*

 *addresses the audience.*

Annie To lose a loved one implies a lack of care - a mislaid parcel somewhere waiting. *(pause)* Inevitably words let us down.

Derek *(enters from stage right, whistling. He is carrying a large eye-catching object)* Be right with you*. (he hurries past Annie and exits stage left)*

Annie I had a boss once who slipped his first-born beneath the cinema seat whilst he and his wife laughed and screamed their way through ‘Jaws’. At the car they felt too light, legged it back - found the baby still asleep among discarded wrappers. (*she sits*) Every day this week I’ve passed Lost Property, tempted to enquire. Just in case. *(she opens her handbag and takes out a small, framed photograph, looks at it, sighs)* You never know.

Derek *(he re-enters from stage left, without the eye-catching object)* Right. What can I do you for?

Annie *(she rises)* It’s only on the off chance, really. I doubt anyone can . . .

Derek Doubt? Doubt has no jurisdiction here, Miss. We give no truck to doubt in this establishment. I have just warehoused a dog of the Shih-tzu persuasion, stuffed some several years hence. No collar. No label. Found in the gents at St Pancras Station. Do I doubt it has an owner? No. Do I doubt it can be catalogued? Filed? Retrieved? Repatriated? No. Do I doubt that one day there will be a glorious reunion? *(expectant pause)* No. (*returning to the computer*) How could I get up in the morning if I did? *(he taps wildly on the keyboard)* Right then. Lost item. (*to Annie*) Details. (*he looks at her expectantly*)

Annie *(she sits, and sighs)* Where to begin?

Derek *(helpfully)* Shape? Colour? Texture? Length?

Annie Sorry. It’s still terribly . . . painful.

Derek *(approaches her nervously)* Yes. Yes . . . (*fascinated by the words*) Loss, separation, severance. Excoriating, just the speaking of them. *(he hands her his handkerchief)* Yet words are the tools with which we chisel. With words, comes definition. With definition, concreteness. With concreteness, objects. With objects, owners. With owners, possession. With possession . . . union. *(to Annie)* Height. (*Annie hesitates*) Height of object.

Annie Height? *(she thinks for a moment then indicates a height slightly below her own)* I suppose . . . about here.

Derek I suppose? Oh no. No, no, no, no, no, no.

Annie *(slightly lowering her hand)* A touch lower, perhaps.

Derek A touch?

Annie A touch.

Derek A touch! *(he pulls a tape measure from his pocket)* Approximations, estimations, obscurifications . . . We can’t build a world on shifting sands.

 *(he hands Annie the tap measure)* Height. *(after a moment, she takes it and holds it at the height of her lost object)* Good. *(Derek takes control)* Allow me.  *(he spools the tape out and takes a reading from the floor)* Fifty two inches . . . point two, six, recurring. (*he lets go of the spooled out tape)* Lovely. (*he returns to the computer*)

Annie Look, you’ve been very kind and helpful, but the fact is . . .

Derek Weight.

Annie The fact is, I only came here out of a kind of . . . despair, I suppose.

Derek Weight of object?

Annie *(long emotive pause)* It took four men to carry the box.

Derek Four men. *(under his breath, doing a mental computation)* Average weight per man . . . divided by gravitational pull . . . plus Boyle’s Law . . .

Annie (*stands by the chair*) Yesterday I dialled her number. Silly isn’t it? Just so I could hear her voice again. No-one answered of course.

Derek *(announces proudly)* Three stone, ten pounds and seven ounces. *(he taps wildly into the computer)*

Annie I just can’t believe I’m never going to see . . .

Derek Distinguishing features? (*Annie hesitates*) Come on. Think. (*encouragingly*) Distinguishing features.

Annie *(sadly)* Very thin.

Derek Oh, excellent. (*he taps in the details*) Very thin.

Annie (*warming to the memory*) Slightly bent with age.

Derek Aha. *(types the details encouragingly)* Slightly bent with age.

Annie (*smiling*) Wonderfully musical.

Derek (*more tapping*) And musical. *(he views the ‘screen’ for a moment then exclaims joyfully)* We have a match! (*Annie moves towards him in disbelief*) Reference 838, forward slash B. Brought in ten days ago.

Annie Ten days? *(joyful disbelief)* Yes, it was ten days ago.

Derek (*triumphantly takes her by the shoulder*) This is why I brush my teeth in the morning. This is why I strap on my bicycle clips and lock horns with death on the gyratory system.

Annie *(tempted by hope)* It can’t be. Surely? It’s just not possible.

Derek Everything is possible. *(he squeezes her encouragingly then exits)*

Annie If I close my eyes, maybe . . . the feel of her hands again, the sound of her voice . . . vivacious, with her little accent . . .

Derek *(he re-enters, slowly revealing a trombone)* Very thin. Slightly bent with age. Wonderfully musical. (*he plays a blast on the trombone. Annie stares at the trombone in bewilderment*) Well?

Annie *(she slumps onto the chair, and sighs)* Oh, Nana.

Derek But . . . (*bewildered*) It’s such a good match.

 *(Final Black Out)*

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Claire Booker at bookerplays@yahoo.co.uk or [www.bookerplays.co.uk](http://www.bookerplays.co.uk) Royalties are normally waived if the performance is for educational or charitable purpose.