



BLAST FROM THE PAST

by Marc Harris

A SMITH SCRIPT

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Synopsis

The play (set in the present day) tells the story of widower Tim's life as an actor, the relationship with his family, and how he is coping generally. He is still feeling young at heart and trying to stay as positive and upbeat as possible. Although he has practical and emotional support from his family, he is starting to think about happier times, with an acceptance of change towards the 'winter' of his life. Tim has set his heart on auditioning for a final acting role before he retires. While visiting his brother Eddie, he receives a message that his agent has organised an audition for him. Tim is aware of his recent memory issues which he has not fully come to terms with and opens up to his brother about his concerns. With help from his daughter Emma, Tim decides to proceed with the audition, even though he finds strong opposition from his other daughter, Linda. While visiting his home, Linda and Tim argue about his plans and she storms out. With self doubt returning, Tim considers cancelling the audition. Realising that Tim is upset, his neighbour Sophie invites him round to dinner. Linda visits Emma later that day where she talks about her fears for Tim. Tim starts to reminisce about his life while at Sophie's and she encourages him to change his mind about attending the audition. Despite his reservations, Tim prepares himself for the day and attends with his daughter Emma, while Linda arrives a little later. While waiting, Tim meets another actor, John, with whom he had previously worked, and begins to feel a little more confident as he believes that there may be a possibility of success and a chance to act for one final time. Immediately after his audition, Tim is thrilled to be offered the role, on the spot.

Cast

TIM HORTON: A well spoken, charming, warm actor, slightly unsteady on his feet, aged mid eighties.

EDDIE HORTON: Tim's easy going brother, aged early eighties.

ROSS SHARPE: A post person.

LINDA HORTON: An outspoken 'glass half empty' daughter of Tim's, aged early sixties.

SOPHIE SHAH: A happy-go-lucky neighbour of Tim's, aged twenty five - thirty five.

EMMA COOPER: The confident, positive twin sister of Linda, aged early sixties.

JOHN BAXTER: A brash cockney actor, who wears a wig, aged mid seventies.

PAULINE JENKINS: An audition helper.

Please note that if the set is constructed in such a way that the audience do not see the post person through the open door of Tim's flat (Act 1, Scene 3), then the actress playing Pauline (Act II, Scene 2) may also play the role of the post person (amended to Ros in the programme, instead of Ross).

Scenes

Act I, Scene 1: Early October – By the seafront.

Scene 2: Two weeks later – Tim's flat.

Scene 3: The same day – Tim's flat.

Scene 4: Later that afternoon - Emma's house.

Scene 5: Tim's flat.

Interval

Act II, Scene 1: The same evening – Sophie's flat.

Scene 2: Four days later - A waiting room.

Suggested suppliers

www.ambient-mixer.com – Royalty free soundscapes e.g. beach, rain.

www.thefacepaintingshop.com – Stargazer tattoo pens.

www.hobbycraft.co.uk – Picture frames.

www.unsplash.com – Free downloadable photos e.g. northern lights, portrait, wedding.

Short Synopsis (for theatre/website/programme use).

A poignant, humorous and uplifting play by Marc Harris.

Take one actor who wants to act; a brother, daughter and neighbour who want him to; another daughter who doesn't, and an actor - who can't! The scene is set for an entertaining drama about family relationships, ageing and hope.

Tim has set his heart on an acting role before he retires, and is trying to stay positive but with recent memory issues, opposition from his daughter, and self doubt returning; can he begin to find his inner confidence, and believe that there may be a chance to act for one final time?

Suggested Music/Songs

I'll See You In My Dreams (ukulele version) by Joe Brown.

The Little Beggar Boy by Astor Piazzolla (recorded by Julian Lloyd Webber).

Moon Silver by William Lloyd Webber (recorded by Julian Lloyd Webber).

Consolation in E major by Rosemary Brown.

Shepherd Piping by Rosemary Brown.

Cabaret by Frankie Vaughan.

Brass Band Samba by Spike Milligan.

Act I - Scene 1

The scene takes place in early October on a sunny day in Hove, with TIM and EDDIE walking 'along the promenade' (across the stage), before sitting on a bench (which is placed centre stage, facing towards the audience) 'overlooking the sea'. EDDIE and TIM are wearing long sleeved shirts and lightweight summer casual jackets. (Please note that throughout the play, any pauses are natural breaks within the dialogue, which generally are intended to last approximately 2 - 4 seconds each but are left to the discretion of the director). Full song plays for 3 minutes. Black-out 2.5 minutes into song. (Suggested song – I'll See You In My Dreams). EDDIE and TIM walk on just as the song is ending. Lights.

(There is general background noise of people, traffic, seagulls and ocean waves throughout. Recommended soundscape: <https://beach.ambient-mixer.com/beach>).

EDDIE They've taken our usual spot, those people.

TIM Oh, so they have.

EDDIE What a cheek.

TIM There's an empty bench over there.

EDDIE Thank goodness we took the bus. My sciatica's been playing up.

TIM I didn't know you had that. *(Both sitting down, occasionally closing their eyes and tilting their heads up towards the sun, in between looking at each other, and ahead, throughout the scene).*

EDDIE For the past month or so, and it's really getting on my nerves.
I'll tell you what, the day I wake up without any aches and pains, will be the day I'll know I've kicked the bucket!

TIM *(Ticking off Eddie for his remark)* Oh Eddie.

EDDIE And I'm getting hardly any sleep. Only about four hours a day.

TIM And how long during the night?

EDDIE Very amusing. I was reading this leaflet for some new pills I'm taking. It says, if you notice any dramatic change like shortness of breath, seizures or sudden death, you should consult your doctor immediately.

TIM You are a twit!

EDDIE That's what it says.

TIM My brother, the hypochondriac!

EDDIE Well, I've got to have something to keep me occupied.

TIM It will do you good to breathe in the sea air.

EDDIE I'm sure it will. I didn't reckon on it being so warm.

(Standing momentarily and removing his jacket)

TIM Yes, it's just right, isn't it?

EDDIE Perfect. What more could you ask for. Sitting here with you, in the sunshine. Watching the world go by.

TIM Well said Eddie. *(Standing momentarily and also removing his jacket)* It's a real Indian summer.

EDDIE Hopefully it'll stay like this for the rest of the week. *(Pause)* How are my two favourite nieces?

TIM They're both well.

EDDIE They said they were going to start a pottery class at the college, last time I spoke to them. A few oddly shaped vases you can expect coming your way then.

TIM Yes, quite possibly.

EDDIE Good for them. Must give them a call. It'll be nice to catch up. *(Pause)* I got a text from Richard a few days ago.

TIM Oh yes.

EDDIE By mistake as it turned out. From his skiing holiday. It was actually meant for Emma, asking for a slight top up to his bank account, believe it or not. Some kind of emergency I think. What a cheek.

(Chuckling slightly) I thought he was taking the piste!

TIM *(Laughing. Pause)* The girls have such enormous affection for you.

EDDIE I've always loved them as if they were my very own.

TIM They feel exactly the same.

EDDIE It's a testament to how you brought them up.

TIM *(Pause)* You know Eddie, when I think about it, I often feel guilty that I wasn't there for them more of the time. To tell you the truth, I've been wrestling with my conscience for some time. Did I get it wrong? Did I sacrifice seeing them grow up for the sake of my career?

EDDIE You shouldn't be thinking like that. You were a star.

(Playfully nudging Tim in the arm twice with his elbow)

TIM Who told you that?

EDDIE 'Course you were. Red carpet material, I remember a few times. And I was proud of you. Still am.

TIM Likewise.

EDDIE Let's face it, you were a busy man, providing for the family. No need to beat yourself up about it.

TIM I tried to be there as, as often as possible but it was difficult. I wasn't always there for them, when I should have been.

EDDIE You were. Don't fret about it, what's the point? You can't change the past.

TIM You're right about that Eddie. But I can try to make amends. I hope it's not too late for that.

EDDIE Whatever you think is necessary, although I don't believe you have anything to reproach yourself for.

TIM *(Pause)* They're wonderful daughters.

EDDIE Even the feisty one?

TIM Yes, even the feisty one. I've had my fair share of, err, disagreements and falling out with Linda but we've always quickly made up. They've been an absolute credit to me. And a lifeline, especially these past few years, they really have. And you have too. They've brought real joy to my life.

EDDIE Yep. *(Thoughtfully)* They have.

TIM *(Realising what he has said)* I'm sorry Eddie.

EDDIE Nothing to be sorry about. You were blessed with children, and that's how it was. Ann would have loved to have had children, so would I but it just never happened. And then, it was too late. That's one of my few regrets. *(Pause)* Not like now. It doesn't

matter how old you are. You don't even need a man these days.

In fact, it won't be long before you don't need a woman.

TIM Seriously?

EDDIE I saw it on a programme.

TIM What is the world coming to?

EDDIE I find it's all passing me by.

TIM It's hard to keep up with everything that's going on.

EDDIE Just don't even bother trying. That's what I say. One less thing to worry about.

TIM You may have hit on something there. *(Pause)* She was a lovely woman your Ann.

EDDIE She was. Great fun. Seems like yesterday that we'd meet the children at the station, and they'd jump off the train and run towards us on the platform.

TIM If only the train had stopped first.

EDDIE An adventure to them, it was. As soon as they were old enough to come here. How old would they have been?

TIM Uhm, eleven or twelve I suppose.

EDDIE Yep, they must have been.